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## PREFACE

Many a teacher of English must surely have exclaimed from time to time at the appropriateness for closer study in the school-room of certain essays, reviews or leaderettes which he has enjoyed for himself in his weekly or monthly perusal of the standard English journals

It is hoped that the following passages, all culled from the Literary and Educational Supplements to *The Times*, will be appreciated by such teachers, both for their matter, which, though thoroughly varied, is always 'educational' in the most liberal sense, and also for their simplicity and raciness of style.

They will be found particularly useful, it is also hoped, for the foreign student, whose compulsory study of the older and more difficult classics tends to colour his own speaking and writing with a distinctly un-English, usually archaic or pedantic, tone in phrasing and vocabulary

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# CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>HUMANITIES</b>	
ART AND SCIENCE	1
CIVILIZATION	20
ELECTIONS AND ELECTORS	28
NATURE FIRST	40
OUR NEW UNIVERSITIES	48
THE BOY SCOUTS	56
<b>CURIOSITIES</b>	
AN AMERICAN FUNCTIONARY	62
DEVILS AND DOCTORS	71
DOG AND MAN	78
IN THE FORETOP	85
THE SONG OF THE RAILS	90
THUNDER AND LIGHTNING	95
<b>URBANITIES</b>	
A LITERARY HISTORIAN	99
BOOKS OF TRAVEL	107
DETECTIVES	120
JOHNSON IN HIS LETTERS	138
LETTER WRITERS	143
READERS AND BOOKS	148
<b>WHIMSICALITIES</b>	
A THRILL WITH A PENALTY	167
RIGHT HO!	170
SOME THOUGHTS ON HOWLERS	173
TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE	184
<b>IMMUTABILITIES</b>	
REMEMBRANCE DAY	187
THE LEGEND OF THE WAR	194

## ART AND SCIENCE

Amongst modern intellectual activities it would seem that science occupies the first place. We are living in one of the great ages of science, a large number of highly gifted men are engaged in effecting a complete revolution in our ideas about the material universe, we are contemporary with at least one scientific genius of the very first order. As compared with the quantity and quality of modern scientific achievements, their imaginative boldness, their splendid sweep, nearly all our present-day achievements in the arts seem relatively lifeless, timid, or just petulantly daring in conception, anemic in execution. This state of affairs is faithfully reflected in our best modern criticism. To turn from the lamentations of our literary men to the enthusiastic optimism of our men of science is to pass from an atmosphere which is sickly to the full vigour and joyfulness of another renaissance. But while we may admit that this description of the present state of the arts and sciences is correct, it does

not follow that science occupies a more important position in the modern consciousness than does art. We cannot conclude that art has nothing to say to us because, it may be, we find it is saying nothing now. Present art does not include past art in the way in which present science includes past science. That we should be living in a period of comparative artistic sterility matters little ; it is still true that the world is full of great works of art. But the science of the past is mastered once for all ; what it has to say it has said, and the science that ceases to progress has nothing more to say. A work of art is permanent in a way in which a great scientific investigation is not. Those who wish to know Dante's achievement must read Dante, in spite of all his commentators. All scientific men know Newton's achievement, but very few of them have read Newton. It is not necessary. Modern science incorporates the whole of science, while all the poetry since Dante's time, to whatever extent it may have been influenced by him, does not incorporate him.

We here touch on the essential characteristic of a work of art : what it conveys cannot be

otherwise conveyed. It is not true that a scientific work is completely impersonal, but it is true that the personal element in it is not essential to its meaning. It certainly seems to be true, in some cases, that a scientific theory could not have originated except in the *individual mind where it did originate*. Nevertheless, this individuality is of no scientific importance. With a work of art, on the other hand, what is important in it is precisely its individuality. To understand in what way a work of art is an irreplaceable achievement we have to understand more clearly what is meant by this term 'individuality'. To the logician language is an instrument for the expression of propositions—and an unsatisfactory instrument at that. To the scientific man, also, language exists to state propositions. In this region we are all at one. Logical discourse is the true *Gemein-platz* of human beings. The profound and subtle differences between man and man are not manifest here, the 'human mind', that definite, single entity so difficult to trace elsewhere, is here apparent. We are all one in the sight of the logician. In logic there is no place for individuality. Logicians no doubt, are

individuals, but their science would only be perfect when they were completely indistinguishable in their work. It is to this *Gemein-platz* that science also appeals. It is to this that science owes its strength, and it is for this reason, also, that science can never be more than a part of life. The ground of science, as it were, is that which all men have in common, and for that reason the greater part of every man is outside science. Directly one penetrates sufficiently deep to come to fundamental divergences between man and man science becomes impossible. The perpetual creation of irreconcilable philosophies is a sufficient demonstration of this. Philosophy attempts to proceed from a deeper region than the *Gemein-platz* and yet to secure universal assent. It penetrates to the region of art, without taking upon itself the limitation of individuality. As a result it is usually neither art nor science, but an unsatisfactory blend of both.

Yet the impulse to say more than the partial thing, the impulse to express one's *total* view of life and the universe, is irresistible in some men. Amongst those who act as if aware that their total view is unique and limited

are artists, those who, for some reason, have never become conscious of their uniqueness as individuals can, with a naive confidence in their own representative character, create philosophic systems. And we, eager for a closer and deeper contact with other souls than the *Gemeinplatz* can afford, turn to works of art or, it may be, to certain systems of philosophy. We are conscious of so much in us that cannot be stated in the form of propositions, we desire illumination on so many things that the language of logic is incompetent to deal with. And the miracle of art is that it can convey just these messages, satisfy just these needs. It will be seen that we are not here considering a work of art as some kind of objective entity existing to create in the observer an 'aesthetic emotion' of greater or less intensity. Whether something which can be identified as an 'aesthetic emotion' really exists we may leave in doubt, we may perhaps admit that objects, probably paintings, exist which arouse this emotion and whose function is thereby fulfilled. But when we come to great works of literature or music it is certain that we are conscious of vastly more than a unique, but non-significant, 'thrill'. In these domains,



## CONTEMPORARY ESSAYS

at any rate, we find more intelligible the statement that a great work of art is the revelation of a great spirit.

The important element in a work of art, and that which determines its order of magnitude, is what we may call its 'frame of reference'. This is sometimes called the artist's vision of life. We mean by it the whole complex of sensibility, emotion, insight, intelligence which, in conjunction with his actual experience, determines the artist's attitude towards life. Just as each one of us has his whole perception and knowledge of the world of matter conditioned by an unescapable space-time framework, so the world the artist presents to us is inevitably conditioned by his unique constitution. It is this which bestows unity on the world he presents, a unity which lies much deeper than any technically harmonious dovetailing he may also have achieved. It is on this that his magnitude as an artist depends; from what depths come his vision and what is its range? This, the truly vital and important characteristic of a work of art, we immediately perceive. We are immediately aware of 'bigness' in a work which may be faulty and even contemptible judged by

all the ordinary canons. And the presence of 'artistic perfection' cannot blind us to the absence of greatness of spirit. The function of a work of art is to heighten our own consciousness. Besides our conscious life we have also, as the psychologists are agreed, a life which is barely conscious or even quite unconscious. We are deaf to many inner voices. In the rush and clamour of the conscious life we cannot, as it were, pay attention to many of the less audible elements of our being. Yet most men are aware, almost uneasily aware, of valuable moments they neglect. We have a sudden intuition, a flash of insight, an unexpected and disturbing emotion. We dismiss them, we decide that, for our conscious purposes, they are of no significance. But these occasions give us a glimpse of the mystery we are to ourselves. We have, in embryo as it were, sensibilities strange to our normal life, ways of apprehending reality which find no place in our systematic thinking. We become aware that we are only partially self-conscious. The increase in awareness that we must assume to have occurred in the march from the amoeba to man has reached no final term. Of what we really are,

## CONTEMPORARY ESSAYS

of what threads link us to the universe, we still have but a dim conception. And need we assume, as many psychologists seem to do, that the elements of which we are normally unaware in ourselves belong to a more elementary and primitive state of being? Doubtless many of them do. But, if there is any truth in the scientific story of man's progress, can we not assume, on this ground alone, that the seeds of a further development lie in us? Are all our moments of what we call heightened consciousness to be explained in terms of the complexes of the psycho-analyst? It seems to us more likely that a genius is a forerunner of the race that is to be than that he is merely a man with exceptional access to the more primitive elements of his being. And those works of art which heighten our consciousness, which, in certain directions, make us aware as we have never been aware before, are not merely bringing into consciousness suppressed primitive desires but are, by their powerful impact, raising us to a higher state of being than we can yet normally live.

It is part of the mystery of art that it can influence us in this way. The effect is not to be

traced to anything in the work of art which can be clearly analysed. The essence of a great poem is not to be found in the meaning of any statements it contains, profound as these might be. For music is even more powerful than literature in this respect. Beethoven's greatest music more completely embodies the superhuman life, conveys more of a knowledge and experience transcending our own, than anything that we know in language. It is as if Beethoven could hear clearly what those who can listen to his music normally hear but faintly. It is something which lies outside our ordinary experience, but it is something to which we are not strangers. Beethoven does, in fact, belong to the rarest and greatest kind of artist, those who extend and make more profound our universe. There are other artists, as Wagner, who illuminate what we are already familiar with, the passions and desires of our life which is concerned with this earth are by them shown forth in all their strength and subtlety. They deal with the adapted life while the others persuade us that there is a non-adapted life, that there is a reality to which we belong and which is different from the reality we know. But both these kinds of artist increase

## CONTEMPORARY ESSAYS

our awareness, and they are to be judged by the extent to which they do this. On the 'æsthetic emotion' theory the function of a work of art is to produce an emotion. We prefer to say that its function is to bestow comprehension, although by this term we do not mean a purely intellectual act. The work of art, by arousing what may be called emotions, but what we prefer to call states of awareness, gives us fresh data for the understanding of life. Just as the mystic can never be content with any view of life which takes no account of the emotion or state of awareness which so profoundly influences him, so those who have experienced the revelation which some great art brings can never again look for the meaning of life within the bounds set to it by ordinary experience. They understand something they never understood before, although they may be no more able than the mystic to say what that something is. The real value of art, then, its real contribution to the life of the world, consists in this deepening and extension of the consciousness of those who are susceptible to it. It is one of the chief agents in the higher evolution of man. The arts should be included

among the other factors taken into account by the evolutionary psychologist when predicting the future history of the race. Science aids a partial progress of man, the scientific outlook is an indispensable element in the modern consciousness, a man who is without it is, at least partially, a primitive creature. And we may even say that the effect of science in aiding the mind to grow to maturity is more obvious than the effect of the arts. But it is for the same reason that the mathematical sciences progress more swiftly than the biological sciences: fewer and simpler elements are incorporated. The arts cover, as it were, a much larger field. The man who understands Newton—who has, that is to say, re-thought Newton's thoughts—has certainly added a cubit to his stature. But the man who has experienced all that a great artist has to convey has been affected throughout a much greater extent of his being.

In using the term genius we must make an important distinction. There is the genius who has greater sensibility than the normal man, and the genius who has a higher degree of consciousness. Wagner and Tolstoy, for in-

stance, are geniuses whose exceptional characteristic is their sensibility. They illuminate our experience by their forcible presentation of it; they do not make it more profound. Neither Wagner nor Tolstoy impresses us as having advanced one inch beyond us on the road the human consciousness is travelling; they react more intensely to what we are already aware of, but we are already familiar with all that they convey. They present us, as it were, with a panorama of the known life. We recognize every figure in the procession, although we may never have seen them so vividly lit up before. The value of this type of genius is that it enables us to take stock of where we are; it is not prophetic. It aids perception, but does not bestow comprehension. As a consequence their work is done once for all. Nothing can start from them. All that Wagner the musician or Tolstoy the novelist aids a disciple to do is to present an inferior panorama of his own. Comprehension is gained by relating our data within a scheme. This is the intellectual act. The comprehension we say some works of art bestow is not so purely intellectual. The relation concerned is a *felt* relation. And we

may say of such a relation that it is more or less profound. And the scheme may be such that our total experience is contained within it. We see it henceforth as relative to a deeper reality, and so we are enabled, in the sense in which we have used the word, to comprehend it. Our consciousness is veritably heightened, for elements in our awareness that we did not fully understand are shown to have been premonitions of a reality we had not grasped. We come into a fuller, greater world, and move with knowledge where before we groped in darkness. The clearest and simplest examples of the type of genius who manifests a higher degree of consciousness, as distinguished from a greater sensibility, are to be found amongst scientific men. If we compare Newton with his contemporaries, for instance, we find that what to them were obscure premonitions did, in his mind, emerge into full light. He stood, as it were, a foot higher than any of them, and from this vantage point could give an accurate map of a country whose contours they could only dimly surmise. It happened, in his case, that this extra elevation revealed nothing totally unsuspected by the most advanced of his contempo-



raries. The curve of human development, as it were, went smoothly up to Newton's level. But, as we see in our own time, that extra elevation may give a view of an astoundingly different universe. Einstein's work is like the discovery of an unsuspected continent. There is no evidence that anybody had any premonitions of this discovery. Hence its profound influence on philosophy. The universe and what we mean by reality have become a profoundly different thing with Einstein's work—so different that it may take generations before the human mind has fully adapted itself to it. The whole of modern physics, in fact, has made a new way of thinking necessary. All its chief difficulties lie in the unfamiliar character of the thoughts it requires us to think. So far the human mind has shown itself plastic enough to make science, but nobody who follows recent scientific developments can help wondering whether the elusive reality science seeks will turn out to be *presentable* to the human mind at all. Yet we do not know how plastic the mind is; we do not know what thoughts are thinkable by man, and it may be that he will find his present consciousness and the possibilities of new

forms yet in embryo within him sufficient to pursue science to finality, or else to pursue it for ever

Science offers such obvious examples simply because it requires only those faculties that all men possess, although most men, of course, possess them in a rudimentary form. But it is not so clear that the faculties of some great artists are possessed by all men. We are often surprised, in the criticism of some writer whose work means much to us, to find that this meaning is completely overlooked, just as some people hear nothing more than 'romanticism' in Beethoven's music. And yet we cannot deny the validity of our own perceptions, it is useless to read or listen if we do. We are, each one of us, in something the same position as the mystic who maintains the validity of his vision in face of a world that does not share it. Those works of art which make contact with a reality different from the accepted one give us no bridge, as it were, by which we can pass from the familiar to the unfamiliar. The artist speaks directly from the reality he has apprehended, the whole work lives in this different atmosphere. Here again the demands

made by art are quite different from those made by science. However strange the universe that science now reveals to us, it is an extension of common knowledge. But the artist-explorer does not show us any connecting links, and he could not construct them. He knows the reality he presents, but he does not know how he knows. And unless we also have some threads connecting us with this reality, his revelation is meaningless to us. And doubtless, among the things that have been seen and put forth, there is much that escapes each one of us. To those whose deepest faith and hope are bound up with their belief in the development of man such works are the most precious productions of the human spirit. The artist-explorer and his colleague, the greatly intuitive man of science, are in the vanguard of humanity.

These two, the artist and the man of science, are indeed advancing towards the same end by two different paths. Herman Melville has said that 'From without no wonderful effect is wrought within ourselves, unless some interior, responding wonder meets it'. We may say that it is the interior wonder that is ex-

plored by the artist and the exterior that is explored by the man of science. And the human consciousness grows through successive revelations in each of these directions. Not so long ago, in the scientific universe of the Victorians, it seemed that man had become insignificant. At the present day there seems to be a tendency on the part of some people to make the universe of science insignificant. The intellect has done all it can, we are assured, and the result is dust and ashes. No further advance can come unless we first abandon our rational faculties, reason, as any other than a merely practical instrument, is discredited. Science, to these people, is a collection of recipes for making things like telephones, but, where the nature of what we feel to be reality is concerned, science is, and must be, completely superficial. One can understand this attitude, and one can only make the mild but sufficient objection that it is due to lack of knowledge. The mysteries with which the man of science is concerned are no whit less mysterious than those over which the poet broods—and the two mysteries are not unrelated. At the back of the mystery of the scientific universe is the mystery

of man's mind—not as a pious opinion, but as a living, important factor in the present and future development of science. Such it has always been and must always be, of course; but it is only recently that men of science have become fully aware that exploration of the outer wonder leads them to the inner wonder. We do not know what yet remains to be accomplished here, but we know enough to be sure that this is not the time to set bounds to reason. In the language of mystics reason is often referred to as if it were some kind of secondary faculty, as if the insight we have attributed to great artists were altogether more valuable. And so some kind of opposition, which we believe to be profoundly artificial, is created between art and science. We believe the fact to be that the two work together; each in its own way is exploring the human consciousness and making fresh demands upon it. It is possible to have a thorough grasp of the scientific outlook and also to be sympathetic to the intuitions of the artist. The modern universe of science is sufficiently profound and mysterious to accommodate an infinite number of possibilities and an infinite

diversity of creatures. Those artists who regard science as being altogether remote from what seems to them to be reality have not understood the conventional character of scientific statements. Truths which are mystical and truths which are scientific must equally be accommodated by the fully developed human consciousness. Any difficulties we at present experience are an expression of our limitations. And at the present day, more than at any preceding period in history, it is possible to grant the validity of both kinds of vision and to agree, further, that they are concerned with the same reality. But this reality is apprehended in different shapes by different faculties, and two aspects of the same thing appear to be two different things. Although we cannot yet fully make the synthesis, we may have faith that the arts and the sciences have finally the same function and lead us ever nearer to the same reality.

## CIVILIZATION

All that Mr. Bell writes, no matter what his subject, makes vigorous reading, on such a subject as civilization his adaptability and wit are specially grateful. He is passionately idealistic, and one associates passionate idealism with ascetic sparseness or feverous solemnity. But these are sworn foes of idealism such as his, which is enamoured of reasonableness, or of what he calls, as it has been called before him, sweet reasonableness—but called so now with a different nuance, as of reason conducing to sweetness, the intellect conceived as an explorer, a discoverer of sweet things, in the little-known world of humane enjoyment.

The civilized, as he envisages them, are those who, understanding what the best pleasures are, enjoy them without a qualm. In Athens at the time of Socrates and Plato, in Italy at the Renaissance, in France and to some extent in England in the eighteenth century, there existed societies of people of this kind; and without a

society not much humane pleasure is ever come by. The quality it chiefly demands is disinterested receptivity, its adepts must be wholly free from superstition, prejudice, and all the ready-made taboos of the conventional. They must be able to recognize every pleasure as good that does not interfere with any other pleasure and, of course, they will value most highly pleasures in which the mind and feelings are most keenly engaged, æsthetic, artistic, emotional pleasures. The only check on their pursuit of these will be the reflection that intense feeling is apt to be exclusive, exclusive both of other people and of other feelings. For to be highly civilized you must be able to enter into as many different kinds of enjoyment as possible, and you must also be able to share your enjoyment—not, of course, ‘in widest commonalty’, Mr Bell’s enjoyment is not joy, and its exquisiteness knows no trace of the moral taint—but with others of your kind, a kind of which, thank heaven, there never can be very many. Of all the delights of the civilized, the most imperious, the most disciplinary is that in which they reveal their civilization to one another in the art of conversation.



Mr. Bell's picture of the civilized man, care-free, kind-hearted, sensitive, remorseless in logic, uncompromising in passion, inactive, tasteful and unshockable, is assuredly very seductive. To be civilized, he tells us, you need not be good and you must not be natural. The artist, the hero, the philosopher, the saint are all unlikely candidates. These men, after all, are variously employed in living, but the civilized must concentrate upon the savour of life, enjoying it to the full and as a whole, enjoying also its subtlest and most recondite details. The idea attracts us because it seems both to open all doors and to invite our entrance. We all know what difficulties dog the hero and the saint, and are daunted by the ascetic ardours of preparation for achievement such as theirs. The charm of civilization as against their rather dismal and dubious successes is that, instead of requiring us to forgo our pleasures, it only calls upon us to multiply, to diversify and, of course, to arrange them, for, naturally, they must always be submissive to the reason at whose dictates they are pursued, and ready for recollection in tranquil talk. The attainment of this equipoise is the latent snag. Mr. Bell

knows all about it, but he is too much held by the glamour of his subject to have much space for the pitfalls. Perhaps, indeed, he has not fully faced the question of compatibility in pleasures whether, for example, the integral enjoyment of life, which is his first requirement, is reconcilable with all those subtler and more recondite adventures which usually engross the epicure.

No one will question, as Mr Bell rightly assumes, that Athens and France in the periods he names achieved a rich humanity which is still a model, and may not ever be surpassed. The endeavour to be civilized must always carry with it the endeavour to bring to cultivation as high as theirs the urbanity, the conviviality which distinguished them. But, of course, not at any price. We must bring our own faculties, our own principles, our richer implementation, our wider experience, our more considered idealism to the convivial level, and it would be better to sacrifice the conviviality than the idealism or the principles, if one must go, for conviviality is mere achievement, while idealism and principles have motive power, they reach out into the future. There is, in fact, all the

difference in the world between being and becoming civilized; and it does not follow in the least that we can become civilized to-day by imitating the excellences and attainments of past ages. Some of their excellences we have outgrown; for others we have no aptitude; others are inconsistent with our presentiment of good. Frankly, the kind of life which Mr. Bell describes as ideally best has the defect of giving the last word to a kind of omniscience known as disillusion. It enthrones reason, makes reason our ultimate arbiter. Yet we all know that the operations of reason are limited, since it does not provide its own material. In fact, the civilized life he adores is, in strict parlance, a life of dissipation; it depends upon a flow of energy from reserves which it has no means of storing and does not care to maintain. It is not an entire life.

Of course, our present-day life in England is, in Mr. Bell's view, deplorably uncivilized. We live contentedly in fog, we see no difference between means and ends, we do not know what pleasure is or what life is for, we have no sense of values. His sallies will be widely appreciated by the barbarians he attacks, who, indeed, will

regret nothing in his pages except an occasional absence of the perceptiveness and politeness which they instil. Has he, for example, met Englishmen, who, in the course of the War, demanded of others sacrifices they were not ready to make themselves? If so, he has had time to discover that his experiences were unfortunate. To persist in preaching upon them suggests sheer wrongheadedness and undermines confidence. It is not really serious. No, Mr Bell is not quite serious, he is brilliant, he will amuse many, therefore, and convince few. Take the æsthetic pleasures, the artistic pleasures, where Mr Bell's arraignment of our deficiency is especially scathing. Even here our blunderings and our grossness appear more respectable when one reflects that the highest attainment in the arts has been the work of men for whom art itself was a means. Perhaps even the finest æsthetic pleasure may not be attainable by those who pursue it for its own sake. The perfect enjoyment of a meal may involve a ten-mile walk over the moors, the perfect enjoyment of a quartet of Beethoven may involve ten years of contest with foes such as he had to contend with. The enjoyment of beauty, like the cre-

ation of it, is the function, surely, of a life committed to many activities with which such enjoyment appears to have nothing to do; so much so that to discover enjoyment to be the end of life may be to lose the substance through which it reaches us.

For enjoyment the surfaces of things are enough, but life demands thickness and solidarity; that is where religion and morality come in—tedious matters to Mr. Bell, but to English people in general both still deeply evocative, and responsible for many of the absurdities and blunderings which evoke his irony. They are factors, we surmise, of far greater influence in the growth and maintenance of a civilization than all that free exercise of irresponsible intellect which Mr. Bell delights in. And are they all illusion? It is not impossible, of course, that illusion is indispensable to growth; it is not impossible that the lives of 'highly civilized' persons must necessarily be devoted to undermining the foundations of the house they live in. Still, there they are and there the house is; and, that being so, it is permissible to wonder whether the decay they inaugurate may not come of their having lost some virtue which

the uncivilized builders possessed, whether, in short, the detachment and disinterestedness on which they pride themselves, in freeing them from the errors of their neighbours, may not at the same time have severed them from the deeper sources of vital experience.

## ELECTIONS AND ELECTORS

A General Election may be more important than it used to be, but it is certainly less amusing. To-day everybody has a vote, and perhaps just for that reason nobody cares much about having one. At any rate nobody makes any show of caring. Eighty or a hundred years ago few had the right to vote, but all cared or pretended to care about the contests. Many people who would not like to admit that they are very old can remember the flags and the colours, the noise and the horse-play, the visibly-flowing drinks giving proof of the invisibly-flowing half-crowns and crowns and sovereigns, which made the old elections as good as or better than a play to a populace which had little to do with deciding them. The painter Watts once regretted that the great of the world had substituted comfort, which is a private possession, for splendour, which in its nature offers itself to communal enjoyment. He regretted the disappearance of the old State carriages and State liveries of the aristocracy, which

were a pageant for all eyes to enjoy. But we have all gone into drab now, as Matthew Arnold began complaining fifty years ago, and you may pass through a town where an election is going on and hardly notice a sign of anything unusual. You will certainly not see such a sight as was to be seen in a certain famous old city during the election of 1874—the daughter of one of the candidates, a baronet of old family and large estate, riding or driving through the streets dressed from head to foot in the two glaring colours of her father's party, as if she were a clown or a jockey. Nor can you have the sporting excitement of what continued up to 1868 or later, the posting of the state of the poll every hour—a system which enabled the cautious voter to hold his vote back till it reached its full value, but also, sometimes, if he waited too long, let him down altogether into a market where there were no buyers, for the reason that one or other candidate had already a majority greater than the number of unpolled voters.

It was all very amusing and exciting and 'sporting'—almost of a piece with the proceedings of the Hon Samuel Slumkey and



Horatio Fizkin, Esq., and not yet very far removed from those of Magog Wrath and Bully Black. But of course it had extraordinarily little to do with any public question or any political principle or policy. Like everything else in those days, an election was a local, even a personal, affair. which only in times of great excitement became influenced by national considerations. Nearly all the elections nowadays are decided, for good or for ill, on grounds which can not unfairly be described as general and national. The immense majority of voters will vote, not for Mr. A or Mrs. B but for Socialism or Liberalism or Conservatism . not for a popular candidate or against an unpopular one (though, of course, a good candidate will always poll better than a bad one), but rather for or against a certain policy. The deciding influence with them will be that they have somehow convinced themselves by argument and reading, or by what they hear said by those whom they meet every day, or by family tradition or class environment, that Socialism is the hope of the world, or that Conservatism is the only thing that can save the country from the ruin involved in

Socialism, or that Liberalism is the sound path to take between the two extremes. No political philosopher would give twopence for the opinion on these matters of one voter in a thousand. Yet if the decision were left to political philosophers alone it is not so certain that it would be a better decision as that it would entirely fail to command the obedience of the country. There would be much less immediate danger in leaving it to the philosophers, who would certainly do nothing rash, which is much more than can be said of democracies, as history too plainly shows, but there might be a greater remote danger, as the philosophers would probably proceed too much by abstract reasoning and be so little conscious of the needs and desires and stupidities of the people to be governed that their rule would not produce a contented and well-ordered State. There is everything to be said against decision by majority, but the answer to the everything is that on the whole it works. A living statesman who can certainly not be accused of too blind a faith in the wisdom of the populace was asked not many years ago after a certain by-election whether it did not

make him almost look back regretfully to the days of absolute monarchy, so insane it seemed to choose such a person as was chosen to be a member of a responsible legislature. But his reply was :—

Oh yes, it's very disappointing and even disgusting, of course ; it's certainly the exact opposite of what theorists supposed the people would do if allowed to choose their own rulers. But there are alleviations under the present system ; the electors can, if they choose, get rid of——at the next election : in the old days people had to put up with Madame de Pompadour and the du Barry for thirty ( or was it forty ? ) years.

And that is true. On the whole, the idiots and criminals who occasionally get elected to democratic Parliaments are fairly soon found out and sent about their business ; and though no one would say that in any democratic country the best and wisest man in a town would be at all certain to defeat Rigby, or Slumkey or Veneering, or even creatures more contemptible than they, yet on the whole members of Parliament are, if generally rather mediocre, at least respectable and well-meaning persons. Indeed, though the House of Commons is certainly duller than it was a hundred years ago or even fifty, it is probably true that

the old Parliaments never contained anything like so large a proportion of members whose chief motive in getting themselves there was a desire to do public work for the good of the country. In that matter there has probably been a continuous improvement since the seventeenth century. There are still members of the House of Commons who have put up with the disagreeableness of getting there in the hope of getting out again before long into a peerage or a judgeship, or perhaps of staying there in some office of dignity and profit. But there were never so few of such men as there are to-day. And only cynics, who seldom know any hearts but their own, doubt that that is not due merely to the fact that there are far fewer of such prizes and places to be got, it is certainly also due to a higher standard of political morals and a more widespread sense of public duty.

People will deny this, for the commonest of all cant is the cant of cynicism. But only those rather numerous people who fancy that the one sure sign of cleverness is a disbelief in goodness will doubt the fact. Any that do may be commended to the pages of Mr

Namier's interesting study, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III.* What his researches prove is that the common notion that the Secret Service in general, and Newcastle in particular, spent vast sums in buying seats or bribing members is quite incorrect. But at the same time he shows by numerous letters about candidatures how entirely absent from the minds of either electors or elected were any considerations of public policy or the common weal. The only matters of principle which he finds affecting elections are religious or ecclesiastical questions, which then, as always, aroused strong prejudices and so could even disturb the smooth waters of an eighteenth-century borough contest. Apart from them, the sole and avowed motives both of voters and of candidates were purely personal. The voter wanted jobs done for himself, his friends and relations; the candidate looked to a pension or an office in the Household or at least to an increase of importance in his own country through being allowed to nominate his supporters for local places in the gift of the Crown. All this has now almost entirely passed away. Public appointments,

great and small, are nearly all made on public grounds, and the opportunities of patronage are few and unimportant at any rate far too few to be of the slightest use to a member who has now-a-days generally to court the suffrages of fifty thousand voters or more.

There are other points brought out by Mr Namier in which we have changed less. He shows that Disraeli's legend of the ' Venetian Oligarchy ' is a legend and not very much more. Only a hundred seats, it seems, were controlled by all the peers together, and of this hundred many were not Whigs and had nothing to do with the supposed oligarchy. But he also shows how hereditary membership of Parliament then was. And in this point there is little change to-day. Any Cabinet of the last fifty years, not excluding the present one (May, 1929) contains the names of many men who would not have been found there if they had not been the sons or nephews of their fathers or uncles. Nor has the arrival of Labour affected this. As Mr Namier points out, the sons of Labour leaders become candidates for Parliament directly they are of age, as did the sons of peers in the eighteenth

century. In another matter of heredity there has been less change than is often thought. It is true that county members are now very far from being invariably landowners in the constituency. But the statement, often made, that all the old families have lost their estates and disappeared is refuted on many pages of Mr. Namier's book. The families whom he mentions as then providing members for the various counties may no longer do that, but a large number, probably the majority, of them are still well known and still territorial. Indeed, there is still great political heredity in the world of the aristocracy. There have seldom been more heirs to peerages standing for Parliament than there were in the 1929 election; and in the then retiring Parliament, as in those of the eighteenth century, there were Caven-dishes and Stanleys and Cecils and Percys and Bentincks, while in the one before, if not in this, there were several Lowthers. So too, in a matter of larger importance. Mr. Namier points out that the eighteenth-century Parliaments, however unrepresentative they seem to us, who think of the whole people, were fairly representative of what he calls

'the political nation' Now that that body—the body of people 'concerned with the nation's political business'—is so greatly enlarged, the representatives are naturally drawn from a larger class. And another result follows. No doubt there is a higher standard, as we have said, of public morals than there used to be. Men are much more rarely personally corrupt. But now, as then, and indeed always, the 'political nation' demands and receives the spoils. When the King was all in all, he and his favourites got whatever plums were going. In the days of aristocracy pensions and places gratified peers and members of Parliament and their relations. To-day the wage-earning classes control the situation, and therefore it is they who have to be provided for at the expense of the exchequer. It is the same principle, only with a different application which has an advantage and a disadvantage. On the one hand the people who obtain the spoils are much more in need of them, on the other hand they cost immeasurably more to satisfy. The Pension List of to-day is a much more respectable and justifiable thing than its predecessor of the time of



George III ; but it costs more in an hour than that cost in a year.

It is this 'political nation' to which all the parties are appealing all over the country at this moment. The men and women who receive weekly wages and will be glad to receive a weekly pension in their old age are much the largest portion of the electorate, and naturally receive most of the attention of those who wish to be elected. The 'condition of the people', always the most important of problems, is now, what it was not always, the problem the solution of which all parties put in the forefront of their programme. The solution which wins the confidence of the people will win the election. At least, then, we have this large gain, that in all the constituencies, and not only in a few, large issues will be put before the electorate. It is on the view taken of great public questions that the results will depend ; not, as so many results did a hundred years ago, on such things as the £5,000 which made Mr. Veneering member for Pocket-Breaches or the 'plural unity' of Mr. Christopher Corporate, whose single vote made Sir Oran Haut-ton and

Mr Simon Sarcastic members for the Borough of Onevote. No doubt there is a degree of truth in Mr Sarcastic's assertion that 'all the changes in human society that have ever taken place from the birthday of the world are only the triumph of one mode of interest over another' The farmers and miners, the stock-brokers and railwaymen of to-day, like the peers and squires of the past, will in most cases support the candidates in whose hands they think their own interests will be safest. But these interests are no longer the interests of individuals they are at worst the interests of large classes, and they will in many or most cases be sincerely believed to be also the interests of the nation Moreover, beside the people who vote by class interest, and beside the people who are pure party men or women and would vote for their party whoever led it and whatever it proposed, there is always a large body of fluctuating voters, independents or mugwumps, or whatever they are to be called. Some of these are no less selfish than the class or party voters they change from party to party because no party can satisfy their clamorous greed But there are others

whose fluctuations are really due to conscience and judgment; and it is these independents, whatever their motives, good or bad, who decide elections. What decides them passes the wit of experts and prophets to pronounce. Soon, now, we shall know their decision; but we shall not even then know its grounds. Certainly very few indeed of them have the necessary knowledge to enable them to weigh the possible effects of the return of this or that party on the prospects of the peace of the world or the prosperity of England. Protocols and optional clauses, nationalization and rationalization, derating and safeguarding, individualism and Socialism, free trade and protection, are all problems on which opinions worth anything can scarcely be formed without a knowledge and a political habit of mind which not more than one in a hundred of the voters possesses. Yet these issues, and a hundred others, smaller in importance but not much less difficult to master, will be partly decided by their votes.

Partly, not wholly; for in the long run we seem to be returning, and shall, if we are wise, return more and more, to the old system

of choosing the Parliament and leaving the Parliament to choose its solution of the problems brought before it. It was a sign of a healthier state of things when, the other day, all the parties agreed to recommend their candidates to ignore lists of questions sent them by bodies outside their constituencies. Such questions always contain a one sided statement of the issue on which they aim at pledging the candidate. The inexperienced candidate yields, perhaps, to their plausibility, and then finds when he gets to the House and hears the question debated that he has plainly pledged himself on the wrong side. It was a still better sign when, a few days later, a member of Parliament wrote to *The Times* to say that he had made a practice of refusing such pledges altogether even when asked for in the constituency. He quoted Burke's famous declaration, of course, and it can never be quoted too often —

To deliver an opinion is the right of all men that of constituents is a weighty and respectable opinion which a representative ought always to rejoice to hear and which he ought always most seriously to consider. But *authoritative instructions mandates* issued which the member is bound blindly and implicitly to obey, though

contrary to the clearest conviction of his judgement and conscience, these are things utterly unknown to the laws of this land, and which arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenour of our Constitution. . . . Government and legislation are matters of reason and judgement, and what sort of reason is that in which the determination precedes the discussion : in which one set of men deliberate and another decide: and where those who form the conclusion are perhaps three hundred miles distant from those who hear the arguments? . . . Your representative owes you not his industry only but his judgement: and he betrays instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

That is the true doctrine ; and it is to be hoped that these rejections of the demand for pledges are a sign that we are returning to it. The very complexity of public business in modern Parliaments ought to compel us to it. For no one can now foresee what questions will come before a Parliament; and the only sound course is to choose a man of character and ability who seems likely to deal both faithfully and wisely with whatever problems he may be called upon to take his part in solving. No doubt those who believe in Socialism will tend to choose a man who shares their belief and those who disbelieve in it one who shares their disbelief ; but subject

to that, and not always subject to it, they will, if they are wise, choose a sound man and leave him as free as his soundness deserves. So elections get partly back from principles and policies to persons, who once wholly dominated them. And indeed it is not in democracy that personality is of least account. Crowds love a man, they are better judges of men than of arguments or policies, and in the mass and welter of puzzling and conflicting issues which arise in a modern General Election they are apt to fly to faith in Gladstone or Disraeli, Chamberlain or Lloyd George, as the best escape from the noise of contending tongues and the confusion of contradictory assertions and arguments. That characteristic grows more important as the electorate grows larger, and it may well be said that the greatest disadvantage of the Labour Party in the 1929 election is that Mr MacDonald has never become a man with a legend to him, a man whom everybody thinks he has got the right idea of, as Mr Lloyd George has in his way and Mr Baldwin in his. A personality is of course disliked as well as liked, and there are disadvantages as well as advantages in being, or seeming to be,

## CONTEMPORARY ESSAYS

what everybody is quite sure he knows. But, on the whole, to be a legend, even if the legend be not all golden, probably serves a political leader better than merely to be the embodiment of certain principles or policies, even if they are all sound or all plausible.

And the results? But this is written before they are known and before the prophets can say 'I told you so'.

## NATURE FIRST

In this lyrical age, when contemporary poetry has such a comprehensive and admiring public, there seems some danger of our becoming obsessed with the beauty of art to the neglect of nature. It is a commonplace that we must be trained to appreciate painting, music, literature, that as a little child comes slowly, and at first only in the briefest flashes, to look beyond the finished beauty of the harebell at its feet to the infinite variations of beauty in the landscape beyond, so we come only with slow steps to perceive the manifold beauty in art.

Art trains us to appreciate nature, to try for ourselves, through the spectacles of books and of pictures, to see what artist and poet have seen. But is not the present-day child so much in tune with the nature lyric, so responsive to both its melody and its faithful pictures of colour, scent, and sound, that he is apt to think too much in terms of his favourite poems, to substitute for his own unconscious poetic utterances,



based upon his imaginative observation, those fragments of verse which his retentive young memory has stored?

Does this type of training lead to personal intimacy with nature? Is there not a danger of a future generation of men and women who can see only Corot's landscapes, who can hear only T. E. Brown's blackbird, who not only never look for fresh aspects of each for themselves, but who pass over all objects of nature which do not expressly bear the hall-mark of art? When, breaking into one's silent, bookless meditation, someone 'comes and quacks beside you in the wood', quoting scraps of verse, pointing out this poet's 'glow on the wood', that poet's 'brown horse-chestnuts, glossy-new', one may be driven to wonder whether the apparently unemotional, unobservant eighteenth century may not have chosen the better part, the part 'that watches and receives'.

On a boat-trip the other day down one of the great Dutch canals I was surprised to see someone take out a copy of a book on aspects of Holland, turn up the chapter on canals, and proceed to immerse herself in its contents. It was a delightful book, and read either before or

after would have enhanced the pleasure of the trip. As it was, however, how much did the reader see of the actual charm of the country? Hers was not merely an idle pose, it was the result of an honest belief that art, being the outcome of a study of nature, has consequently transcended nature and become the one thing needful

School-life for girls is only too apt to foster this tendency. The set time-table, the compulsory games, the formal walks, leave little opportunity for private nature study, even where the school has the advantage of being in the country. Why is nature study so often confined to the junior forms in the school, so that those who do not eventually take up natural science have no chance of studying biology at an age when they would be much more likely to appreciate it? If we could win our children to an intimate friendship with nature, if only in one of her many aspects, we could safely give a second place to the introduction of that art, whether literary or pictorial, which aims at 'holding a mirror up to nature'

## OUR NEW UNIVERSITIES

The mediæval college, it is well known, combined a pious with a benevolent intention. Its scholars prayed daily for the repose of the founder's soul, and in return received a higher type of education than that provided in schools of various kinds. It is also well known that so late as the last quarter of last century it was still the opinion of many distinguished men that a university ought to concern itself only with 'the teaching of useless knowledge'. Both are facts which we do well to keep in mind in considering the modern university in relation to its environment.

The *raison d'être* of the mediæval college implied a selection by those who administered the funds of the society of such persons, from a given locality or otherwise possessed of a specific qualification, as satisfied the terms of the founder's will. When similar provision was made for boys at a village school the resultant community tended to take root in some place intimately associated with, or actually intimated

by, the benefactor. With the gradual tendency of scholars to congregate at Oxford or Cambridge the principle of founding institutions in a place other than one peculiarly connected with a founder began to be adopted. Colleges were founded at Oxford or Cambridge, at wide distances from the homes of the student beneficiaries, each of these communities being more or less drawn from a particular district. Thus there sprang up in England, as in other countries during late mediæval times, the situation briefly summarized by the phrase 'town and gown'

The fact that nine people out of ten associate the words 'town and gown' with the word 'riots' is itself a strong testimony to the unsatisfactory nature of the duality it represents. That duality was further accentuated in pre-Reformation times by special ecclesiastical considerations upon which it is not necessary to enter at present. Apart from these, the existence of 'foreign' communities of undergraduates in a particular town, chosen for one reason of convenience or another, explains the mediæval attitude. It is a matter of general knowledge to those interested in higher education in what way the provincial universities of England have come

into being—extension classes, mechanics' institutes, adult education of one kind or another, classes promoted by the Science and Art Department, all have played their part. The main fact to be noted is that, practically without exception, the modern universities have come into being where there was a demand for them—that is to say, where there was a demand for such courses as they could provide, or where they provided such courses as were felt likely to be serviceable to the community of a particular area. It is difficult to find an adequate word to describe that area, but once the universities have come into being there seems no reason why it may not be described simply as their environment. The shipbuilders of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the cotton spinners of Manchester, and the farmers of Berkshire did not each concentrate on one particular place and there found colleges for the benefit of students from their own district who might wish to engage in studies bearing some relation to the immediate industries of that district. Instead, they sought in their own areas to provide for the type of education they particularly desired to promote.

It is easy to speak disparagingly of great

industrial cities and of great industrial magnates whose generosity is often confined to the promotion of research in processes actually connected with their own industry. And thus recalls to us the old Oxford remark about universities and 'useless subjects'. There can be no doubt that in the main the maker of that remark is right. It is not only the subjects taught in a university which matter, but the attitude in which these subjects are approached, and above all the way in which subjects are interrelated. The philosophical and literary subjects do appear more capable of standing by themselves than others, but it is decidedly the business of a university so to bring into contact the theoretic, the practical and the cultural that a harmony may result. In determining what subjects may be admitted as part of a university curriculum the manner in which they are to be taught and their relation to other subjects in the curriculum have constantly to be borne in mind.

The modern university, therefore, has come into being by a different process—a process which has partly shaped its curriculum, and stands in a relation to its environment which differs fundamentally from the position of the

older universities. The question consequently occurs: What is to be the relation of the university to that environment? In large industrial cities the question has been swiftly answered, for the university in such has taken its place naturally as an integral part of municipal life: it draws its students almost exclusively from the city itself and its environmental area; it promotes, in addition to and in close connexion with the older university subjects, such subjects as are of service to the community around it; and it enjoys the active support of the industrial magnates of the neighbourhood. This is what one would wish to see: in such cases the university acts as a kind of filter, and what it receives from its environment is offered to that environment again with enhanced value.

So beneficial a reaction as has been described is due largely to the fact that the undergraduates of the university are the younger citizens of the city in which it is placed. There is the closest possible connexion between the lecture-rooms and the homes of the people. The culture which is received in the one is dispersed in the other, and to a certain extent, in the case of undergraduates from the surrounding district

who find lodgings in the city, the influence of the university passes beyond the mere bounds of the family and impinges on a wider community. In this way the modern university rather resembles a church, whose members are associated together for particular purposes, but who by living in daily intercourse with a large variety of men and women make a considerable impression on their fellows. The medieval university differed little from the monastic communities of the period. Where a hostel system of any great extent arises this worthy and beneficial intimacy is in considerable danger of being spoilt. For, while for the undergraduate from the rural area or extremely poor home the hall of residence may in itself be an almost necessary part of university education, the fact is not to be lost sight of that the hostel is the badge of an alien population. Men and women whose homes are in the university city do not live in hostels, and a university which has many hostels is a university which is either drawing its students from an extremely wide area or attracting students from places entirely outside its environment.

Those whose eyes are fixed on Oxford and



Cambridge, or who desire to perpetuate the traditions of the past, may perhaps regard with complacency the influx of undergraduates to particular centres, even when such undergraduates happen to be natives of a university city. To do so is surely to ignore the fundamental fact about a provincial university—namely, that it owes its being to a demand which it was at a given moment able to satisfy, and is in duty bound to continue to shape its courses in such a way as will make it of the highest utility to the community among which it is placed. There can be nothing of ‘town and gown’ in the attitude of the modern university. It cannot regard the citizens of the city where it is established as existing for its benefit. They are not its hewers of wood or drawers of water, nor is it a separate community from them, but they and it together form an indissoluble whole. The men and women who buy and sell in the shops and marts of the city are the parents and kinsfolk of the younger men and women who are matriculated students of the university, and many of those most strenuously occupied in industrial concerns will in their time have passed through the class-rooms and labora-

tones of the university in preparation for the life of service they desire to offer to the community at large.

Perhaps, having regard to this new ideal of mutual respect towards which modern industrial communities and modern universities must strive, the old plea for 'useless knowledge' may be restated, and the modern university be described as an institution which, while supplying courses of a character demanded by its environment, firmly, persuasively, and without ostentatious advertisement seeks to circulate a high and disinterested series of values, which are bound in course of time to permeate the whole environment. Only by entering into the fullest, richest, and most intimate relationship with the environmental community will the modern university be able to embody that spirit which all men, whether they be of Oxford or Cambridge, or of the provincial universities to north or south, believe that a university exists to create.

## THE BOY SCOUTS

*The World Jamboree, by which the Boy Scouts celebrated the 21st anniversary of their foundation, took place at Arrowe Park, near Birkenhead, in August 1929.*

For some of us the memory of the War begins and ends with Boy Scouts. There recurs the vision of a hot dusty afternoon of early August, 1914. Walking under a railway bridge that crosses a suburban common, we have come suddenly on a tent inhabited by half a dozen small Englishmen, grave, aloof, responsible, but not overweighted by their new importance. Like so many thousand others, they had been preparing for a holiday camp when they were diverted to the direct service of the country; and now they are guarding the bridge, as they will continue to guard it for months and years. Then an echo rings in one's head; it is the shrill reverberation of a Scout's bugle sounding the 'All Clear', which had become familiar to London after many an air raid and was now by a

very British turn of symbolism announcing that the Armistice had been signed.

Those who recall these things will be thinking that, though the Boy Scouts are keeping their twenty-first birthday, they really came to manhood long ago when they were just six. Only seven years had gone, in 1914, since the Chief Scout had set up on Brownsea Island, in Poole Harbour, his experimental camp of twenty-five, and by 1918 several of that little company were numbered with the 10,000 older Scouts who gave their lives. All these, however, with Jack Cornwall and the other Scout V C s, are but a heroic side issue. It was the mere boy guarding the bridges and the waterworks, or taking over from the coastguards their task of watchfulness by the sea, who earned so well the citizen's respect that, ever since, the movement has received due appreciation, mingled with some criticism from time to time, but safe from belittlement or contempt.

In the circumstances it was, and is, rather wonderful that the Scout should not put on airs. A small boy, temporarily aggrandized, can be very pompous indeed, as dreadful examples have proved. But these particular small boys are

always showing how admirably they survive ordeals which sorely try the talents of other official buglemen. They can control a crowd without so much as hinting by their behaviour that they would like to belabour it with their staves; and they can guide distinguished persons to the seats allotted them at a ceremony without betraying by a flicker of an eyelid any undue consciousness of the privilege.

The grafting of the smaller graces on to a boy's natural desire to be useful is part of the secret discovered by the Chief Scout from ancient Spartans, modern Zulus, and others he has met or read of in his large experience. If this divination of sources does not strike everybody as convincing, then we must fall back on the Chief Scout's instructive and constructive knowledge of human character; which probably is as good an explanation as will ever be forthcoming. The springs of character, which were surely the sources of the movement, have been defined by one who in happier circumstances might himself have founded the Boy Scouts. 'There never was a child (unless Master James),' says Louis Stevenson, 'but has hunted gold, and been a pirate, and a military commander, and a

bandit on the mountains, but has fought, and suffered shipwreck and prison, and imbrued its little hands in gore, and gallantly retrieved the lost battle, and triumphantly protected innocence and beauty' The Master James of the exception was, of course, Stevenson's good friend, Henry James, who cannot, indeed, by any stretch of fancy, be credited with a juvenile desire to imbrue his little hands in gore.

To the (almost) universal child Baden-Powell appealed by his experiment on Brownsea Island. The response was so great that in three years the defender of Mafeking left the Army to devote his energies to holding up the ideal of backwoodsmen, knights, and explorers. All these figures of history and romance did not possess the same virtues, but when the sense of adventure is added to the capacity of resource, and endurance to the code of chivalry, there emerges a composite portrait which every decent, unspoil boy would like to claim as his own, though, if he remain decent and unspoil, he will never dream he has come anywhere near it.

The Privy Council of 1912 so highly appreciated the Chief Scout's aims and methods that, as a result of their inquiry, a Royal Charter of

Incorporation was granted. But, while progress was being made in numbers and authority, a school of critics began to object that Boy Scouting was militarism in disguise. They still raise their voices, generally with most honourable intention, and with deeper emphasis since the bitter lessons of war have come home. A better understanding of Scout jurisprudence, not to speak of moral education, might turn these opponents into the strongest supporters of the system they fear.

When Stevenson's tender irony inspired him to the passage we have quoted it was glancing at the foundations of the being man has inherited from the long line of his ancestors on earth. So Scottish a moralist would have been the last to deny that the worse along with the finer passions are represented in the child's ambitions. But the child, like Ophelia, turns everything to favour and to prettiness. The Chief Scout, getting wisdom from babes, may have told himself that, if he could organize a corps which would be a practical transmutation of natural impulses, he would do good in his day and generation. His boys should learn the hunter's craft, but with one another for prey. Their cunning should be

disciplined into alertness. Their mischief should be rendered innocuous by the provision of an object. For lack of adventurous opportunity they should be given the adventurous mind. Though destiny had prevented their 'blocking Pentelican for Phidias' or being 'borne with Raleigh to the West', it could not deprive them of neighbours and comrades to serve by a daily good turn. Why should not the factitious and evanescent desire to be pirates, military commanders, and bandits serve as an impulse to knight errantry of a modern kind in a modern world? The whole underlying philosophy is that of beating swords into ploughshares—or wooden staves. The military virtues it retains are loyalty, obedience, honour and devotion.



## AN AMERICAN FUNCTIONARY

Among the many things that astonish British visitors to the United States is the good behaviour that marks the American students on public ceremonial occasions, as compared with what we find on our side of the Atlantic. All our prejudices prepare us for just the opposite of what we find in American universities. We have heard much about the exuberances of Americans of all types, and we naturally expect young Americans to be at the crest of the wave of riotous self-expression. Not even yet have we got rid of the suggestion 'wild and woolly West', and in our innocence we are quite willing to carry it over even to the staid and standardized East. So when we attend a solemn university function we expect something particularly exciting.

Our first disappointment on such an occasion comes with the gowns and hoods of the dons. At home we are accustomed to violent butterfly effects. So gay are our British colours that there is a certain flattening effect produced by

the rather sombre tones of the American university regalia. With us it is noticeable that at social functions connected with the universities the women present almost invariably dress in plain black or white, realizing as they do that, for such occasions only, they cannot compete with the primary colours of the men. In America, however, the women can make their selection from the rainbow without any fear of competition from the dark gowns and subdued hoods of the men.

It cannot honestly be said that the sounds in an American auditorium are muted so as to balance the subdued colour scheme of the academic dress. But there is a sort of orderliness about the American student row that has a certain affinity with the obfuse hue of the academic garb. What mainly surprises the British visitor is the fact that the academic orator of the day is allowed to say his piece amid decorous silence. With us on such occasions there is an ungodly noise during the half hour or so before the procession appears, and the din is often kept up vigorously during the speechifying. Our Scottish universities have a particularly bad reputation in this matter, and the extramural members

of our university audiences suffer greatly from the outpourings of student exuberance. So when a Scotsman comes to an American graduation ceremony he is lost in wonder and amaze at the prevalent decorum.

There is a reason for all things, and this oppressive good behaviour may be traced back to no more recondite source than the yell-leader. Everybody knows that the Americans are super-organizers, so no one need be surprised that students' ebullitions, like everything else, are organized to a fine point. In British university halls, before a public ceremony takes definite form, the students are full of superfluous energy that finds an outlet in all manner of individual channels. Each man has his own way of expressing that particular aspect of himself that he feels called upon to obtrude upon public attention. To an onlooker this violent racket is appalling, but really the total amount of noise is absolutely much less than what we find during the corresponding period at an American celebration. The difference is that the American tumult is organized. The students have recognized conventional modes of expressing themselves. Their yells are standardized, and can be

effectively manipulated. Probably the American yell-leaders do not realize how benevolent is the work they are doing. Their aim is generally to get the biggest volume of sound possible, and to manipulate it so as to produce the finest time and tone effects. A well-trained student body brings out wonders in the way of accuracy of time and variety of pitch. When at long last, after the uproarious din has subsided, and

Silence like a poultice comes  
To heal the wounds of sound,

the orator stands up to face his audience, the exhausted yell-leader makes a final effort and urges his flock to give a crowning explosion of 'rahs'. When this climax has been reached the exhausted leader sinks back into his seat, and his obedient minions follow his example. The leader ceases from troubling, the yellers yell no more, and the orator gets his chance.

It may be asked why a British hallfull of students do not also sit back in the same balmy state of content. The answer is not far to seek. We have already noted that the British pre-speech noises are much more diffused than the American. In the period before the actual speechifying begins there is seldom in a British

university hall as much noise as in a similar hall in America. The British students exhaust themselves in relays—now one group, now another comes into the limelight, and each group has a period in which to recuperate before its turn occurs again. No doubt when it comes to actual singing the whole body joins in. But what is a plain, straightforward song as a fatigue-producer compared with the exciting college yell! The merciless yell-master demands an infinitely greater output of energy than is involved in even the most vigorous rendering of 'John Peel' or 'John Brown's Body'. The yell calls upon all the reserve energy of the student lungs. Besides, there is an organized appeal to the emotions in the American hall that is absent from the British. Each of the English or Scottish students does during that pre-speech period whatever seems good in his own eyes. Each man is a law unto himself, and there is usually not much output of emotion. In America there is not only a direct appeal to the emotions, but there is a definite stimulation to greater physical effort. The youngsters are being urged, ordered, challenged, even taunted into reaching ever heightening maxima of sound.

Often, indeed, they rise to such an ecstatic pitch of noise that the yell-leaders get keenly anxious for the appearance of the procession, lest haply their yelling crowd may reach a point beyond which it cannot go, in which case there is danger of the crowning discomfiture that is called anti-climax.

So far the advantage lies entirely on the side of the Americans. The organized vehemence of the yellers produces a seemly impression, an artistic rhythm, an almost religious fervour. The effect of the final 'rahs' is comparable to the climax of an orchestral presentation. The resulting silence is specially effective by way of contrast and appropriateness. The exhaustion leads to a dignified appearance of attention that is very imposing, even though we may have to confess to a certain ambiguity in that term. But when we look into the matter we are not quite so sure. In America, as in England, our school teachers spend a great deal of time at their conferences in telling one another that they must be particularly careful in encouraging their pupils to be true to themselves, and above all things to think for themselves. The sacred individuality of the boys and girls

must be preserved at all costs. Professors at the universities say pretty much the same to their students. And in the face of all this comes along the yell-leader, and proceeds to standardize the expression of the student.

A good deal of power is put into the hands of the yell-leader. He determines the number of 'rahs' to which each prospective speaker is entitled. If really popular, the approaching speaker hears as he comes forward the genial shout of the leader, 'Now, boys, Professor Rackstraw, six.' A less popular man may have to be content with 'three', or even with 'two'. The scheme seems to put too much power into the hands of one student, but when we look more closely into the matter we realize that the monarchy of the yell-leader is, after all, a limited one. When it comes to an appraisalment of a speaker's popularity the leader has only a narrow range within which he may ration the laudatory 'rahs'. A call for 'six' in the case of a really unpopular orator is apt to produce such a diminuendo on the final three as to call unpleasant attention to the waning enthusiasm.

The important point in connexion with the organized yell is not so much the possible mis-

use of power by the leader, as the danger of standardizing emotion. We are only beginning to study collective psychology, and do not at all know our way about among its intricacies. We feel in a vague way that standardization is being carried to excess in a great many directions, but hitherto we have had the comforting belief that it has imposed itself upon us by ordinary and natural methods. Standardization has just come about in the nature of things. But in the person of the yell leader we seem to encounter a deliberate standardizer. He sets himself wittingly to stir up certain emotions and to guide them into channels that he chooses, or that others choose for him. The student body is definitely committed into his hands to deal with as he (or his advisers) thinks fit. No doubt, as we have just seen, his power is limited, but within its range that power is great. Main Street and Babbitry are the outstanding strongholds of social standardization, but in the college auditorium we have the field of its deliberate cultivation. In Main Street and in the service clubs standardization just happens, it occurs in the mere nature of things, but at college it is deliberately fostered. The yell-



leader is a more or less trained standardizer. His fellow-students he regards as raw material to be worked up into a unified whole that shall respond automatically to his stimulus. In a way his goal is the direct opposite of what the progressive teacher sets before himself. The pupil's vaunted individuality and his cherished 'thinking for himself' go headlong into the discard, and the yell-leader glories in the elimination of all this 'personality stuff'. Fortunately there appear to be two distinct fields on which the two influences can work. The yell-leader is content with the more or less emotional side. Thinking does not come into his consideration. The teacher, on the other hand, is all for thought, though he does claim also a certain suzerainty over the emotions. If he can get the general control of the thinking of his pupils, he can afford to let the yell-leader have his head (and his throat) on the occasions when emotion is the order of the day.

## DEVILS AND DOCTORS

When Thomas Carlyle heard that his friend, Henry Taylor, was ill, we are told that, without inquiring as to the nature of his sickness, he straightaway went to see him, 'bringing what was left of the medicine that had helped Mrs. Carlyle when she was ill.' Apparently, he knew little more as to the ailment from which Mrs. Carlyle had suffered than of the malady which afflicted Taylor. Thus reminded of the attitude of the wiser of mankind to the problems with which medicine professedly deals, we find Dr. Haggard's anecdotal history of medicine and medicine-men throughout the ages credible though still amazing. The superstitions of one age, though regarded as specialist knowledge by their contemporaries, often look like the wildest folly to subsequent generations. Yet when one recalls the names of the great men to whom these chimeras seemed as sober truths, it is impossible to dismiss the suspicion that many of the orthodox dogmas of to-day, so generously scattered along the borderland of

science, may in due course furnish material for as generous and as 'quaint' a volume of human error and deception as the one which Dr. Howard W. Haggard has written, entitled *Devils and Doctors*.

It is possible that so mythical a product as unicorn's horn would to-day have more difficulty in establishing its therapeutic reputation in cultivated circles than when quite small specimens were sold to wealthy invalids for fifteen thousand pounds. Yet even Ambroise Paré, who 'tried unsuccessfully to abolish the custom prevailing in the French Court, of dipping a piece of unicorn's horn in the King's cup before he drank, as a precaution against poison', and protested that powdered mummy made from bodies stolen from the gallows was medicinally 'as good as that brought from Egypt', seriously discusses such mythical physiology as that of a girl who turned suddenly, much to her surprise, into a boy. Crocodile dung, of which the European apothecaries in the late Middle Ages complained as being adulterated by dishonest traders, no longer figures in our pharmacopœia; yet so strong-minded a man as Robert Boyle, who removed from the official list some of its more

flagrant absurdities, retained in his revised list of orthodox drugs the sole of an old shoe 'worn by some man that walks much' Dr Haggard quotes from Dr Scarborough, one of the many physicians who attended Charles II on his death-bed, an account of the medicinal treatment meted out to the King in his last hours In the course of the two or three days he lay a-dying he was first bled from a vein in his arm, next his shoulder was cut, and the incised area cupped, an emetic and two successive purgatives were then administered.

This was followed by an enema containing antimony, sacred bitters, rock salt, mallow leaves, violets, beet root, camomile flowers, fennel seed, linseed, cinnamon, cardamom seed, saffron, cochineal and aloes This was repeated two hours later and another purgative given The King's head was shaved, and a blister raised on his scalp

A sneezing powder of hellebore root was afterwards prescribed, and other powders, extracts and cathartics were repeated at frequent intervals 'A plaster of Burgundy pitch and pigeon's dung was next applied to the King's feet' More bleeding and purges followed, and dozens of other medicaments were applied with-

in and without, including 'forty drops of extract of human skull to allay convulsions'. At the end of it all, Scarburgh writes:—

Alas! after an ill-fated night his serene majesty's strength seemed exhausted to such a degree that the whole assembly of physicians lost all hope and became despondent: still, so as not to appear to fail in doing their duty in any detail, they brought into play the most active cordial.

The unlucky victim of this polypharmacy might well have felt, with Oliver Wendell Holmes, that if 'the whole *materia medica*, as now used, could be sunk to the bottom of the sea, it would be all the better for mankind, and all the worse for the fishes'.

It is doubtful if any history of quackery could surpass this record of drugs and doctors in examples of humbug and credulity. Whole stretches of this book are but a series of illustrations of that aphorism of Hippocrates: 'To believe one knows is ignorance'. Although Dr. Haggard is a loyal defender of medical orthodoxy, his narrative of orthodox practice through the ages lessens one's surprise that so many royal personages, statesmen and famous writers have favoured the great quacks of history rather

than the 'regular' physicians. At the same time, it is interesting to speculate with the author as to the effect on the life of any modern city were the protection of medical science completely withdrawn from it.

The man of the twentieth century fails to appreciate fully the benefits that he derives. He simply accepts it, and forgets. His appreciation of medical science is, to a great extent, limited to an ardent desire for the *elimination of the diseases which still afflict mankind*.

Dr Haggard reminds us how recent a thing is anatomical knowledge and how new is surgery as we understand it to-day. The dressing of wounds, the opening of abscesses, and the amputation of limbs were pretty much the only surgical procedures possible until quite modern times. Even the Egyptians, in spite of their practice of embalming, had a very rudimentary notion of how our bodies are constructed. So with the Babylonians and the Jews, so, even, with the Greeks. Until dissection of dead bodies came to be tolerated any real knowledge of anatomy was impossible. It appears that during the Renaissance an occasional dissection of executed criminals was allowed by ecclesiastical authorities.

## CONTEMPORARY ESSAYS

Invitations to the dissection were issued to city officials and other prominent persons. In the presence of the assembled company the Papal indulgence permitting the dissection was read, and the body was then stamped with the seal of the university. After these formalities an introductory oration was read, and the physicians sang in chorus.

The actual dissection was performed by a servant, the physician standing at one side and pointing to the various structures with his wand. It was Vesalius who, in the middle of the sixteenth century, first unravelled and declared the anatomical intricacies of the human body, and so paved the way for a true surgical art. But anatomical knowledge alone could never have led to the triumphs of modern surgery. Before the eighteen-seventies practically none of the internal operations now successfully performed every day in our hospitals could be safely attempted. Anæsthetics and asepsis, and not increase of skill in the handling of the knife, are the true explanations of modern operative efficiency.

Surgeons were not always treated with the respect which they enjoy to-day. By old Babylonian law if, as the result of an operation, a

patient lost his life or his eye, the surgeon had his hand cut off by way of penalty. Dr Haggard quotes a number of more recent examples of similar efforts to promote careful surgery. In 580 the King of Burgundy had two surgeons executed upon the tomb of his Queen because she died of plague after they had opened her plague-sores. In 1337 a surgeon was thrown into the River Oder because he failed to cure John of Bohemia of blindness. Pope John XII burned an unsuccessful surgeon of Florence, while after the Pope's death his friends flayed the surgeon who failed to keep him alive. The mass of interesting material collected in this book will bring home to the reader the horrors from which applied science has helped us to escape.



## DOG AND MAN

'Dog and Man'—the order is a challenge to *Advocatus Diaboli*. From what we know of Dog it is not of his choosing; Dog bears himself humbly towards Man, and if he possesses the intelligence ascribed to him, he must attribute many of his troubles to the inconvenient zeal of dog worshippers—to 'caninization'. One reason that the Jews led him a dog's life is that the Egyptians had made him a god; have the Jews anything more complimentary to say of him than that a living dog is better than a dead lion? And from what Herodotus tells us even in Egypt there were drawbacks to holding an exalted position. 'If a cat dies in a private house by natural death, all the inmates of the house shave their eyebrows; on the death of a dog they shave the head and the whole of the body'. In such conditions would a dog often die a natural death—the death he must be taken to prefer?

Moreover, *Advocatus Diaboli* will have no difficulty in showing that there is a case for Dog

to answer How does Dog explain away his reputation in the East? even in the west, dog and its variants—pariah, mongrel, puppy, and so forth—are not employed in compliment to man, or woman either There is the black dog of the nursery to expatiate on, and the dog in the manger, and the dog who lost the substance for the shadow, and the dog in the bowling alley, and the *chien de mûrier*, and the *Schwein-hund*, and the funny dog It is—to quote *Advocatus*—a disagreeable, a most painful duty to rake up such matters. It is a duty, for his learned friends, Mr Sloan and Mr Farquhar, in a recently published book, tend to ignore them, and in arriving at a just estimate of the relation of Dog to Man they should be given as much consideration as the evidence of their constituting a mutual admiration society This is the point that Mr Sloan and Mr Farquhar wish to make, and they insist further that though Man has not infrequently disregarded the resulting obligations, Dog has consistently honoured them.

They do not appear to be of the school that associates the dog with the wolf, they regard him as created specifically, and not so much to

be a dog as to be the friend of man—so specifically that what was created was not a canine tribe but Rover and Snip. For the origin of the alliance between Dog and Man they go to Mr. Kipling—taking First Friend in preference to Red Dog. The cave man when he went a-hunting was required to leave the dog ‘inside the cave beside the fire to look after Mrs. Cave-Man and all the little Cave-Men’; this may be taken also as the first of many outrages committed by man on dog. The authors go on to trace the relationship through the ages. The esteem in which dogs were held in Egypt is established by the pictures given of Egyptian dogs—they include the haughty Abakaru who belonged to King Cheops, and a poor wretch of a pet dog wearing a thick and highly ornamented jacket. Abakaru looks as if he got more than he gave—as if he held a privileged position; he is less interesting in this connexion if he owed these privileges to being a god instead of to being a dog. The Greek dog Argus is more significant; though he belonged to a king, he was essentially a private dog; no one, not even Penelope, looked after him in the absence of his master; the authors might have mentioned that ‘the careless

women tend him not', and also that his greeting drew a tear from that hard case, Odysseus. The Greek shows both sides of the relationship, some men in Homeric times cherished dogs and some took no notice of them, again, Argus was a sporting dog, he had diverted Odysseus in a special way and did not owe his place in his affections to pure doggishness. The first family dog in this record is Katmir, the dog of the Seven Sleepers. In him we have the dog who loves and is loved in return. Katmir made himself respected for pure doggishness, and that among Mohammedans, in return he enriched their language with this scarification of the mean man 'He would not throw a bone to the dog of the Seven Sleepers'. To judge from the illustrations taken from old Chinese pottery the Chinese had developed all the potentialities of the dog, when with us he was still the Wild Thing in the Wild Woods. He has long pervaded China from palace to kitchen, and we are given a quotation to show that as long ago as the time of Confucius he had made himself a medium through which the Chinese might observe Chinese rites with Chinese frugality. 'The torn awning will serve to cover the dear house dog in his grave.'

‘Quod semper, quod abique, quod ab omnibus’—by the time the writers have recounted the tributes paid to dogs among ancient peoples they have proved that Man and Dog supplement each other. Dogs have never told us what particular need of theirs is satisfied by men; but men—poets, and writers to the *Spectator*, and others—have made it clear what they appreciate in dogs. Apart from express statements the stories of the doings of dogs recounted in this book go to suggest that if there had been no dog, man would have had to imagine him. We are shown Dog as embodied courage and loyalty and gaiety. To these qualities—the first that Man would stipulate for in a friend—Dog adds the possession of a tail. Is there anything to be encountered in life so flattering as the wagging of a dog’s tail? The writers are happy in the tributes they pay to the alpha and omega of doggishness, the nose and the tail; they say that God ‘gave Dog a tail, to curl and wag and be pulled by Man’s children, and to be “the outward and visible sign” of the thoughts and feelings of the inner Dog’.

After describing the relationship between Dog and Man in times past, the authors discuss

the legends and superstitions connected with dogs, and end with 'True Stories of the Dogs of To-day' We meet the dogs we know, Aubry's dog, and Bran and Gellert, we miss Crib—not an accommodating dog, or he would have been presented as the obverse of Gellert. There are amusing tales about dogs, and a good many which go to show that dogs reason One or two of them carry the argument a stage beyond showing Dog and Man as partners in a business carried on to the material advantage of both or as exciting in one another individually agreeable emotions in these the dog proves himself morally necessary without him certain human qualities would remain latent. One comes from the *Mahabharata* as translated by Edwin Arnold. A woman was to be stoned, on her way to execution she passed a dog dying of thirst, she took off her embroidered shoe, let it down into a well by her silken girdle and gave him to drink, the king saw the act and the gratitude of the dog and he bade her go free—'I dare not show less pity upon thee' Another such story comes from a chapter dealing with the services rendered by trained dogs in the war It seems that among the partisan dogs there

## CONTEMPORARY ESSAYS

was a neutral dog who visited the trenches of both sides :—

A wounded man lay out in No-Man's-Land, and his officer was puzzled as to how to get him in. Then he saw the little dog and called him to him. 'Here, little man!' he said, 'you take that over to the Boche. See?' And he gave the dog a chit on which was written, 'Will you allow us to bring our man in'? In a few minutes the dog returned with an answer, 'Will give you five minutes'. Two men went out and brought the wounded man in, and as they came back they gave the enemy a cheer by way of thanks.

It takes a dog to make a sympathetic job of being a neutral.

## IN THE FORETOP

As we come out from the warm shelter of the Ward Room the icy rain, borne on the wings of the gale, flicks our faces like the fringes of a wet towel manipulated by a bullying schoolboy. The scream of the wind across the ship is like the high-pitched ravings of a monstrous cat shrieking its rage into the desolate night. The darkness is of that tense, quality, familiar to patrols between the lines of two armies, which produces a terrifying impression of loneliness and is yet alive with menace. We grope forward blindly till our hands strike the brass rail of the ladder, dank and clammy like the face of a dead man. On the upper deck the blacker mass of the picket boat looms up like a cliff about to fall on us. We pass round its stern and in a trice are among the comforting bustle of humanity.

The mast on a battleship seems at first sight to be like the toes on a human body—a survival of an instrument which once performed a useful function, but which is now retained only



by the conventional instinct of the designer. The impression is misleading. That which from the distance appears to be a squat blob of steel, serving as an ungainly tree for the support of bunches of steel mistletoe, turns out on closer acquaintance to be a graceful and lofty column, fitted at intervals with tastefully designed flats. On the first floor there is room for a large body of signallers, and an immense cabin for the use of the Admiral at sea. The second floor is the so-called bridge, consisting of a splendidly fitted working cabin, surrounded on three sides by a broad walk. The next floor has ample room for another batch of officers and their satellites.

So far the ascent is made by a broad and easy wooden staircase, but from now upwards things become more primitive. The mast tapers nakedly up to a vast steel mushroom, whose occupants clamber to and fro upon perpendicular steel rungs clamped to the main shaft. My companion tells me mysteriously to equip myself with stout leather gloves and a gas mask and starts the ascent. I find out the object of the gloves. The upper rungs, where the funnel is nearest to them, are nearly red hot.

A final heave through a small manhole brings

us into the foretop. It is a fairly large circular chamber, into which men and mechanical devices are fitted like the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle. It is full of a dim blue light, such as prevails in the chambers which the Swiss hew out of their glaciers for the amusement of tourists. It is full also of a noxious vapour, and that peculiar tummy smell inseparable from the vicinity of a coal mine. The foretop, being just over the orifice of the funnel, receives the full benefit of the furnace gases whenever there is a following wind. I now, therefore, learn the object of bringing a gas mask.

A desire to see what happens, however, makes me prefer to cough, and my companion and I crouch down upon two wooden stools in the least affected corner. He hangs round his neck a thing like an inverted stethoscope, which is really a telephone communicating with every part of the ship. Through it he issues orders for the testing of every part of a tremendous fighting mechanism which can launch over fifty tons of projectiles from its side at any one moment. I realize as he does so that the very few men on the mast are the only part of the whole ship's company who really see anything

at all of a battle. The hundreds in the bowels of the vessel are but blind automata ; so, too, are the gun-crews. Even the firing is not, though it can be, controlled by those who serve the guns.

Suddenly, upon a small tablet in front of us, letters of fire appears to tell us that the turrets are loaded and waiting. A voice croaks out, ' Expect to encounter enemy immediately '. Peering through the broad slit which runs round the chamber, I seem to see some darker mass against the black curtain of sea and sky. Even as I look the side of our ship bursts into flame, and, with a scream louder even than the wind, a salvo of star shells departs, to burst in golden stars far out over the waters. There lie the enemy's ships, immobile and silver, seeming to shrink from the fierce light. In real battle we should at once have blazed every available ounce of our broadside at them, but mercifully we are not shooting to-night. They merely turn the cold eye of their searchlights upon us, so as to show us what they could have done had shells been allowed to follow light.

In their discomfiting but helpful stare we clamber down. The deck, once so eerie and desolate, has become a friendly, recognizable

thing of wood and steel A bugle sounds Back  
in the Ward Room pessimistic officers tell each  
other how certainly they would be dead in real  
warfare, and optimistic officers explain how  
certainly that fate would have been reserved  
for the enemy

## THE SONG OF THE RAILS

Though unpleasant enough for human beings, snow has proved once more how effective a silencer it can be, and recently many observant railway travellers must have wished that inventors could find some permanent working substitute for a coating of snow laid over the 'road'. Above a few inches the depth of the coating seems immaterial; the main point is that it should be smooth and continuous enough to silence the action and interaction of echo and re-echo. That done, there remains the noise of the engine—probably irreducible, though some locomotives are noisier than others—and the general clatter of the underframes and couplings of the coaches. Ordinarily this is accentuated by the diversity of the apparatus carried under the floor of modern railway stock, but when the track is under snow the usual gamut of noises is so muffled that intimate conversation between passengers is easy and express journeys are shorn of what many regard as an incurable nuisance.

They are not shorn, however, of the never-ending staccato hammer of the wheels on the rail joints, and, if they were, one occupation of the book-weary, sleepless traveller would be gone, for he could no longer fit his mental song to the ever-changing rat-tat of the wheels. Every alteration in grade, every change in speed, varies the tune and the accompaniment to which one may set almost any melody. But if rails were laid from end to end without joints there could still be the ceaseless rhythm of the train as it rolls along over hollow place and hard rock, peat-hag or yielding sand, picking its way carefully over water-troughs, viaducts, and shrilling curves, crashing over points, with ever and anon the harsh grinding of the vacuum brakes, and their high *falsetto* sigh of relief when released by the engine-driver to the accompaniment of a torrent of deep notes from a huge bassoon disguised as a vacuum-producing ejector.

On no two railways is the song of the line the same, for it depends on many factors apart from the road bed. The number and type of wheels and the length and weight of the carriages alter the note. The old type of

spoked wheels will sing a song of joy while their modern, solid prototype hums a dry, rather flat accompaniment down in the bass. It is the difference between June and December. The short four-wheeled and six-wheeled carriages call a tune very different from that of the thirty-ton corridor coaches with a four-wheeled bogie-truck at each end, and in the newer, articulated stock, in which each coach shares a bogie truck with its fellow, the tune is quite *piano*. The note continually alters, too, as the train goes along. No hardened traveller on the Great Western line can fail to distinguish the six-mile Maidenhead-Twyford stretch from that between Swindon and Wootton Bassett. Similarly it does not need the sea-note of the Caledonian engine whistle to warn experienced Anglo-Scottish travellers that the long bank down which the night mail is rushing is that at Beattock and not Shap. As soon as Carlisle is reached and the journey to Euston continued, there is a pronounced change to the unmistakable, subdued booming note of the famous line as the train runs on the hard, unyielding track—for all its lack of elasticity as nearly perfection as a track can be—and, an octave higher, the hum

of the train-lighting dynamo under the floor

Water-meadows cause an unfailing change in the note and give nocturnal travellers a certain clue to their whereabouts, as when bass drums roll out unmistakably while the train clears culvert after culvert on the Reading Westbury line for instance, or between Ashford and Sandling on the old South-Eastern Railway, or down Salisbury way on the *Southern line*. Tunnels, again, are unforgettable landmarks in a night journey, and no one who notices these things could confuse the Clayton tunnel, under the South Downs on the Brighton Railway, with that at Balcombe, with the ear splitting *crescendo* of the last hundred yards at the southern end, due, it is said, to the peculiarity known as 'rolling rails' The old traveller on the South-Eastern line can tell off hand whether the train is in the Sevenoaks or Chislehurst tunnel. Though there is not a steel sleeper on the line, the metallic resonance on certain sections reproduces the 'going' over the steel sleepers all-metal roads of Germany

Time has brought many changes in the construction and upkeep of the permanent way of our railways, and the song of the rails has



changed, too. But it is there all the same, and as long as metal wheels run on metal rails will remain.

## THUNDER AND LIGHTNING

The first hint of a storm does not come with the roll of distant thunder, or even with the dazzling flash, to a practised watcher the signals will have been clear for half the day. A certain unrest and excitability in cloud shapes, a tendency on the one hand to the formation of a system of streaming webs of gossamer vapour, criss crossed and contorted, and on the other of hard-edged crested cirrus, is warning enough of the gathering powers, before the lower clouds under the canopy begin to throw up crisped heads towards the zenith, mocking one another with curious repetition of form, and long before the tops of the huge mountain-masses of cumulus—the ‘thunderpiles’ or ‘judges’ wigs’ of country folk—rise far away beyond the horizon. There is no absolute certainty of storm in the most ominous shows of electric cloud, as farmers and gardeners know too well when they watch, with many memories of hope deferred, for the breaking up of a settled drought. Some unknown interference may divert or disperse the

mobilization of the rain-bearing vapours as completely as it can falsify the forecasts of the meteorologists who rely on their telegraphic reports of approaching depressions, established or disestablished anticyclones. But when there is no counter-check, the massing and deployment of the forces of the storm go on with a most impressive unity and comprehensiveness. The motion of the enormous cloud-piles, which can dwarf the tallest Alps, is in itself an absorbing spectacle ; they sail on the wind, and their masses mount and expand, at a pace which is too slow for the eye to measure, but which gives to the mind an impression of equable and irresistible energy. Their summits may be of dazzling whiteness ; but their flanks, with toppling precipices and heaped-up buttresses, are usually flushed with a dull coppery glow, and the horizontal lines of their bases are of black-purple gloom. Before the storm breaks, all the structural details of the cumulus are lost in vague curtains of vapour ; the hard-edged summits begin to fray out into fan-shaped canopies ; vast forward-reaching veils of ashy grey hide the core of the tempest. There is a dead stillness in the air, which perceptibly affects wild life : an arch of black

mist, with ragged fringes trailing and coiling low towards the ground, drags onwards with gathering speed, and beneath it glimmers a blank wall of the coming rain.

As the first big drops begin to spatter, a sudden gust of wind blows fiercely from under the black arch, and with it comes the blink of the first near flash and the crack of the over-head peal. The light may be only a broad blaze or pulsating flicker, the reflex of the unseen discharge, or it may be the hard-edged sinuous track of the actual bolt or 'fork', whose redoubling curves, very like those of a mountain torrent, generations of illustrators, unimproved by Turner's vivid truth or by the records of photography, have conspired to misrepresent by angular zigzags. The colour of the electric fire as it reaches our eyes is somewhat variable, according to atmospheric conditions. It is often of blinding whiteness, but sometimes shows a bluish or pale purple tint, at night it may be rose-pink, and in a storm at daybreak, with a setting moon, it will show a lurid red. There is even more variety in the quality of the thunder—a stunning detonation, a roar and rumble as of mountains falling, a rending crash like the

sweeping away of forests, a dry crackle, a majestic long roll echoed from cloud to cloud, an earth-jarring boom which ends the peal.

As a thunderstorm comes on with a sense of boding and unrest, it departs with something like a benediction. The lightning pulses at longer intervals, and the listener who scarcely marked a heart-beat between the flash and the clap, counts his five, ten, twenty seconds before the dying roll of the thunder answers the winking fire. A gap of blue opens overhead ; the trailing fringes of the storm are crossed by a rainbow or lit by a broad sunset glow. The earth sends us the delightful reek of timely rain ; the last low peal is hardly heard for the music of the birds singing in chorus among the sparkling and dripping boughs.

## A LITERARY HISTORIAN

To say that the collected essays of Professor Saintsbury's are extremely readable is to say something that can be taken for granted, and having said it, we have not only the irritating sense of having, no matter how deliberately, uttered a platitude, but the far more disturbing consciousness that the platitude is considerably less than the truth, and—worst of all—ungracious into the bargain. So we begin hunting about among our words all over again in vain, for there is no word to express the nuance of our thought. But it may be that we can find words, although we can find no word, for it. Roughly, the thought is this. Professor Saintsbury, in these delightful volumes, is an essayist rather than a critic, just as in his other delightful volumes, he is an historian rather than a critic. He is too catholic for a critic. The judgment, thus baldly propounded, sounds very nearly preposterous. How, it will be asked, can a critic be too catholic? And the only answer is, he can. 'A rose by any other name

would smell as sweet.' No doubt; but the answer is that we need a name for that perfume and that sweetness. Professor Saintsbury's fragrance may be the fragrance of the rose, but if it is, the rose is not the flower of criticism. Nor is it. The smell of criticism is astringent and exclusive, like the smell of verbena. The odour of Professor Saintsbury's flower is generous, full-bodied and inclusive.

Criticism is not very generous or very inclusive, because it consists, primarily, in the attempt to order the universe of literature in obedience to the imperious demands of a temperament. The critic is a microcosm who finds in his experience of himself that from some ineradicable habit of soul he regards certain essential things as more important than others; and he starts out to look for them in the macrocosm of literature. They are there, of course. All that is contained in the microcosm is contained in the macrocosm also. When he finds them, he proceeds to rearrange the universe of literature according to his needs. The work which holds more of his essential elements rises, the work which contains less sinks, in the hierarchy. So he accomplishes a new clarity and achieves a

new order, and the importance of his achievement depends upon how essential his essentials are. But it is inevitable that from some point of view or other his activity should appear narrow. He is bound, in some degree, to work in blinkers, otherwise he would never do what he has to do. Nor is there any finality about his work. What finality there is in literary estimations is achieved not by critics but by that secular consensus omnium bonorum which is the tradition.

The critic says—of course, he does not say it very explicitly—that, if he makes certain demands upon literature, such and such is the resulting order. He has to be convinced that the elements which he demands are all important, for so much of the subjective illusion is a necessary condition of his exerting himself to the full to discover his essentials. If he is a real critic it will turn out that the elements of his predilection, which cannot in the nature of things be all important, are really important. By concentrating upon these he will have revealed some new and important facts about the constitution of the great universe of literature. His order will, in fact, be seen to be a real order.



not the only order, not the final order, but a valuable and revealing order. Like the experimental scientist, and with something of his abstraction and deliberate narrowness, he will have made his contribution towards the charting of the universe.

Professor Saintsbury's attitude is fundamentally different. He is not really concerned with the establishment of orders and hierarchies. The necessary exclusiveness would irk him. He wants to enjoy all that is in the universe of literature. The notion of getting himself into such a state of mind that he could no longer enjoy all that is enjoyable would be abhorrent to him; the idea that one should sacrifice certain faculties in order that others should be more perfect is, we imagine, if not strictly incomprehensible to him, certainly eminently reprehensible. That way, he would feel instinctively, lies madness and radicalism and reform. He is, on the contrary, the *bon viveur*, the enlightened hedonist of literature. Your true critic, on the contrary, has not a little of the ascetic in his composition, if only because he has to pretend that things which certainly do exist in reality are not. That rather remarkable attitude of the

mind, as Plato first discovered, is really necessary if you are to impose an order on the cosmos. Professor Saintsbury is a realist, in the best sense—he wants to include everything.

It is not surprising, therefore, that he should find it impossible not to betray a dislike of Matthew Arnold. It peeps through, Professor Saintsbury cannot disguise it—there is something in the very structure of Arnold which jars upon him, and that something, we are sure, is the critic in Arnold. So, too, with Carlyle, whom Professor Saintsbury truly admires. Though he recognizes that Carlyle was a literary critic of the first rank—at any rate before he became the Sage of Chelsea—we miss any recognition of the real quality of Carlyle's criticism—the immense driving power of its initial narrowness. Carlyle's literary criticism was extraordinarily exclusive—consider the estimate of Keats in the essay on Burns, or the patronizing contempt for the exquisite Grillparzer in the essay on German dramatists—yet it was first class, it was and is living, vivid, revealing. The whole truth is not there, far from it, but what truth there is had been passionately apprehended. Carlyle's demands were narrow demands, but they were

demands he had made upon himself; he knew, by his own deep experience, what he was asking for and why he was asking for it. This strenuous and impassioned quality of Carlyle is not the one which penetrates into Professor Saintsbury's essay. Professor Saintsbury admires him as a writer and likes him as a Tory; but Carlyle's Toryism and Professor Saintsbury's were very different things.

In a sense, therefore, we might say that Professor Saintsbury does not care about digging much deeper than the surface. But immediately, as ever with him, we have to qualify the remark, lest some one should imagine we are saying that he is superficial. He is indeed concerned with surfaces; but the surfaces he is concerned with are really there; they are an integral part of the objects to which they belong, through them are manifested their recognizable individualities. It would be impossible for him, even if he had the inclination, to spend his time investigating why certain of those surfaces were thus and not otherwise: if he began to search for deeper laws, he would have no time left to cover the vast territory he has made his province. But that is, of course, not the reason why he avoids the

enterprise. That is temperamental he does not believe in the enterprise, those deeper laws, for him, do not exist.

There is among men of science, even to the layman, one gross and palpable division, that between the observers and the theoreticians. In botany, there is the man who observes the flower, and there is the man who makes a biochemical analysis of its structure, in physics, there is the man who investigates the atom experimentally, and there is the man who fiddles about with recondite equations in a study without any apparatus. And scientists of the one kind have been known to manifest a certain impatience of scientists of the other kind, they have even been known to refuse each other the title of scientists at all. A similar division holds in the province of literary criticism, which might well be described as the science of literature. There are the observers and there are the theorists. The theorists are those to whom we have, in this particular context and for the purpose of defining the unchallengeable excellence of Professor Saintsbury, given the name of critics. The observers we might call the historians. If the division may be accepted, then surely no one who

## CONTEMPORARY ESSAYS

appreciates it would deny to Professor Saintsbury the title of a great literary historian. Having made so much clear, we feel no ungraciousness in declaring that his volumes of essays are extraordinarily readable. Open them anywhere, you will be interested. They are not the least valuable part—as in any real work the appendices never are—of the great natural history of English literature upon which Professor Saintsbury has been engaged for half a century.

## BOOKS OF TRAVEL

Books of travel are of all kinds, from the dry records of laborious statisticians to the trivial diaries of globe-trotters. Explorers, seamen, archaeologists, naturalists, bores, engineers, ethnologists, officials, politicians, liars, journalists, dreamers—what type of man or woman has not written a book of travel? They pour from the press in an unending stream, they are read, they are forgotten, and ninety-nine out of every hundred pass away into oblivion. The great book of travel is rare, as great books in any class are rare, and for precisely the same reason—namely, that people of genius, personality and character are rare. To write a book of travel appeals irresistibly to large numbers of persons who have no creative power whose books are the mere reflection of a shallow curiosity and of a foolish egotism. These deplorable works, which spread a sort of suburban light upon the beautiful and wild places of the earth, throw into only greater relief the achievements of the true travellers, who, by reason of

their fortitude, their imagination, their insight, and their ability to evoke the atmosphere and colour of the world, have produced books that rank as literature and last for centuries.

The travellers of old, those indomitable pioneers of unplumbed seas and unknown lands, the accounts of whose voyages have been preserved for us through the pious industry of Hakluyt, Purchas and Pinkerton, were men of rugged prejudices, simple credulity and extraordinary courage. Foreign lands were to them one breathless succession of marvels. In their spacious Elizabethan manner they described a universe still almost as wonderful as the Tartary of Marco Polo. A morning wind seems to stir through their eager, crabbed sentences; and their quaint descriptions, so full of detail, inaccuracy and a spirit of surprise, have the very quality of the age in which they lived. Their writings will survive, not merely because these adventurers were the pioneers of the modern world, but because they had an unconscious gift, in the rush of their unbelievable experiences, of making us actually feel how fantastic and visionary a place our mapped-out universe once was.

The great travellers of those bygone days, enduring incredible hardships and inflicting every kind of cruelty, had, nevertheless, much that was childlike in their natures. The aspect of the visible world bore for them something of the incommunicable romance that his surroundings bear for a small boy of this era. It is that which makes their records so precious and so fresh. They were quite unsophisticated. They had no idea of fine language or of conscious poetry they had simply the feeling that everything was miraculous. Later on came other pioneers, great travellers too, who had lost this primitive sense but who yet were not modern in our meaning of the word. Anson and Cook, the description of whose voyages must rank as amongst the most remarkable travel books of the eighteenth century, had immense curiosity and immense perseverance, but they had lost the childlike feeling of wonder. Their spirit was scientific, the earth was no longer to them a place where men with tails or two heads were possibilities.

The eighteenth century, indeed, saw the beginning of scientific exploration. Mungo Park's voyages to discover the source of the



Niger are a case in point, and his *Travels in West Africa*, so unassuming in its tone, so entirely free from any flourishes, is all the same the work of a man in whom the call of the wilderness amounted to a passion. Such travellers had the essence of romance in their very bones, and it is all the more impressive because they did not share it outwardly with their readers. They were not 'characters' like Waterton and Trelawny (not to mention a host of seventeenth-century travellers), whose *Wandering in South America* and *Adventures of a Younger Son*, the products of early nineteenth-century experiences (and, in the case of Trelawny, imaginings, one fears), can be read to-day with mingled delight and irritation. No, they were sober-minded men whose romantic cravings were hidden even from themselves, and who were persuaded that it was the desire for knowledge alone that drove them forward to hardships, peril and often death.

In that same eighteenth century (and, indeed, for much of the nineteenth century) a book of travel was essentially a book of facts—whether accurate or inaccurate. It was not an age that cared for scenery or supposed that

a work of travel might be made into a work of art. Literary men did not travel widely, and the self-conscious reactions of the modern traveller were undreamt of. The world was still sufficiently strange for travellers' tales to be tales of the unknown, and still sufficiently inaccessible to lure only professional wanderers into its remoter regions. The romantic revival had not set in, and that was all to the good, because its sentimentalism produced nothing but ineffective sighs so far as travel was concerned. That too, like the dryness of the eighteenth century, had to run its course before the great travel books of modern times were made possible. In Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* and Boswell's *Tour to the Hebrides*—a foreign tour, if ever there was one—literature certainly entered the field, but their importance is not as travel documents under any interpretation, but as human documents. Sterne and Boswell were the blindest of men in regard to their surroundings, the thing that interested them was their fellow humanity. They were, in short, typical children of the restricted eighteenth century.

It is only of recent years that travel has become, so to speak, a new mode of expression

for the ego. The external world is no longer mysterious, because the external world is known. With few exceptions, all that remains for travellers now is to give us the atmosphere of places, to show us the influence on themselves of different scenes, to clothe the earth and the sea anew in their moods and thoughts. The dynamic traveller has yielded to the static: the great book of travel of to-day, even when it outwardly resembles the great book of travel of yesterday—which it seldom does—is yet subtly and irrevocably different. The telescope has given place to the microscope. The very words in which we express our feelings have a new significance. The wonder we feel is not the wonder Cortes felt when he gazed ‘silent upon a peak in Darien’; the romance we feel is not the romance that Speke felt when he tracked the upper waters of the Nile; the human interest we feel is not the human interest that Fielding felt when he reached Lisbon. All has changed. In this century our emotions are concerned with shades at once more delicate and more primitive. We are looking for something that has been in the world since the beginning but has never yet been discovered; we are groping for the root of

things so that we may perchance find there the answer to our own unrest. The alchemist of old sought for the philosopher's stone, because he felt that there was a hidden harmony in nature waiting for the magic word, the traveller of our time seeks for it too, because he feels around him the whisper of some imminent revelation.

The mid nineteenth century produced some books of travel written by naturalists which have a quality of high endeavour, rich achievement, and grave prose that places them in the front rank of the real literature of adventure. Darwin's *Voyage of a Naturalist*, Wallace's *Malay Archipelago*, Bates's *Naturalist on the Amazons* are as absorbing as great novels. There is a solidity about them which is not heavy but soothing they take us without any fireworks into the dim recesses, they make us see that nature is astonishing but not more astonishing than her quiet investigators. One remembers these three books particularly, but that period, in which science had begun to take on a new aspect, produced many books of travel worthy to be preserved. The writers were not men of letters and their minds were concerned with other problems altogether, but their books

bear the stamp of a deep sincerity and so are readable to this day.

Arabia, for some reason or other, seems to have inspired a passion for travel in the minds of certain men all of whom were extraordinary in their degree. Burckhardt and Palgrave (in spite of his doubtful veracity) were extraordinary men, but they were not so extraordinary as Burton and Doughty. Burton wrote many books of travel, but he wrote carelessly and few of them are still read. Yet his *Pilgrimage to Mecca* will last, not alone by reason of the subject, but because he threw into it all his untamed spirit of adventure and all the force of his rebellious character. But this book, remarkable as it is, pales before the amazing *Arabia Deserta* of Mr. Doughty. This singular man wandered solitary for years amidst the savage tribes of desolate Arabia, and his book, written with a sort of Biblical archaism that seems to catch the innermost spirit of that fanatical and stony land, is surely the supreme book of travel. Picturesqueness, learning and irony have never been combined to rarer advantage. The book will be studied as long as travel books have any attraction for mankind.

Two other remarkable men have pierced into Arabia of recent years. Wavell's *Modern Pilgrim in Mecca* traverses, in its first portion, much of the ground covered by Burton, but Wavell was, if anything, even more animated than his predecessor, and his account both of Mecca and the Yemen is a real *tour de force*. He, unfortunately, was killed in the war, but Mr Philby, whose *Heart of Arabia* has recently appeared, is, like Mr Doughty, still alive, and we may look forward to a continuation of that fascinating record of Arabian politics and exploration. His style is not wrought in the pattern of Mr Doughty's heroic achievement, but in his limpid prose he has conveyed to us the very panorama of the unchanging desert and the very soul of the arid Wahhab. And Colonel Lawrence's *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is a remarkable achievement.

Arabia has indeed been fortunate in its travellers, but there is probably no country no large tract of land, that has not had an initiated interpreter. One cannot be certain, because the travel literature of the world is huge beyond computation, but foreign countries, notably France (one thinks naturally of Claudel,

with less assurance of Loti), have produced many great travellers. That is to say, great in the stricter definition, not merely clever or adventurous, but great enough to leap beyond that stage of ability and achievement where the gulf is fixed. Even when we think of travellers writing only in English, we can dot the world with books of outstanding merit. It would be interesting to make such a list, but if we mention only Hudson's *Idle Days in Patagonia*, Belt's *Naturalist in Nicaragua*, Mme. Calderon de la Barca's *Life in Mexico*, Mr. Cunninghame Graham's *Mogreb-al-Akksa*, Borrow's *Bible in Spain*, Kinglake's *Eothen*—books everybody has heard of—we have here at once six different works, dealing with six different parts of the world, whose enchantment will not fade.

Some people have a prejudice against travel books written—or, should we say? thrown off—by men who have made names for themselves in other walks of literature. That seems a reasonable prejudice. One does not want a travel book, however distinguished, to give one the feeling that it is a holiday recreation between more serious tasks. Nor does one want a

literary atmosphere, although one wants literature. Perhaps the real traveller cannot read with the greatest pleasure such books as Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey*, or Mr Kipling's *From Sea to Sea*, or Mr Belloc's *Path to Rome*. In the very finish of their precision they somehow appear to miss something which the true traveller can at times catch. And what upsets one so much in the travel books of so many literary men is the hint of patronage and superiority, as though all this were very well, but not the real thing. Such an atmosphere, the merest hint of it, is fatal to the very breath of adventure, which, like every great emotion, is simple at heart. And yet, if one were to analyse carefully, one would have to make innumerable exceptions to this general rule. Surely Henry James's *American Scene*, for example, with its exquisite flavour of a recovered vision in the eager subtlety of an inquiring mind, is a real work of travel, whatever else it may also be. And, in a totally different direction, cannot the same be said of Bryce's *South America*, which, though slightly ambassadorial in tone, has a kind of cultured and philosophic curiosity about it,



added to an unflagging, swift observation that really startles a reader by the power and serenity of the outlook?

What, then, really constitutes a book of travel? Is it enough that the writer should tell of a distant land, or must he be at heart a wanderer? Must there be a conscious impulse of movement and discovery, or is it enough that the traveller travels mainly in his own mind, absorbing the atmosphere of his surroundings and giving it forth to us tinged with his own personality? One asks such a question wondering how one can legitimately place the witty, disillusioned volumes of Mr. Norman Douglas and other writers of this type. Are they, perhaps, to be classed as finished fancy or reminiscences rather than as books of travel? But such niceties, after all, are more for the cataloguer than for the connoisseur. Indeed, we need not ask for meticulous definitions; we need only ask whether the books themselves justify an exception. On this basis we may include as travel books such studies of customs as Ford's *Gatherings from Spain* and Lane's *Modern Egyptians* such novels as Herman Melville's *Omoo* and *Typee*, and such an

inspired reverie as Mr Conrad's *Mirror of the Sea* Travel, in its fullest expression, will embrace them all and fit them into one or other of its niches. Travel books, like travellers, become more difficult to classify as time goes on. But so long as a traveller carries with him his own romance in the sense of contrast, in the joy, in the loveliness and grandeur of changing scenes, in the feeling that nothing can really cheapen and nothing really explain away the wonder of the universe, he is a true traveller. And so with books. Few things have vulgarized the world like books, and few things have exalted it like books. The effect of most books of travel is depressing in their garrulous inanity, but the effect of the rare great books of travel is to make life more enticing and more mysterious. By opening our eyes they let us see how little we saw, they let us feel that the horizons of the world are indeed infinite and unsurpassable.

## DETECTIVES

It is, we are assured by the observant, to the complexity of modern life that we owe the increasing vogue of the detective story. The exponents of the particular form of science which deals with the subject claim that the minds of most people never really grow up, but remain at the happy age of twelve or fourteen. The adult mind wearied with the cares of business and the immature mind still eager for tales of adventure between them provide a vast public for the writer of detective stories; and, as a rule, he seasons his wares to the taste of one or the other. The mature brain will reject the slap-dash productions of the writer who relies too much for effect upon the improbable, upon wholesale violence, or too obvious conclusion-jumping on the part of his hero. It has a palate for a fine bouquet of reasoning and deduction, its taste for mental relaxation is not so jaded as to require constant murder to excite and hold its curiosity. It can be content with vegetarian fare; and will relish a well-written salad of forgery, impersonation, in-

insurance fraud, blackmail, or theft. The mental Peter Pan, on the other hand, is inclined to be more carnivorous in his tastes. For him the corpse of loathly and splenetic millionaire, venerated nobleman, or beauteous damsel should decorate the carpet in the first chapter with horrifying adjuncts of hot lead, cold steel or colder poison, regardless of the fine sport which its owner might have made while still in health if in the charge of a writer of the Vegetarian, as opposed to the Carnivorous, School. It must not be denied, however, that a salad-monger who has won his spurs as such and collected a band of admirers by his skill in charming them with stories of handing over rogues to nothing worse than penal servitude can, if he suddenly turns man-eater, give them a very much finer thrill by unexpectedly hunting a man to the gallows than if he had already familiarized them with an unvarying diet of corpses at either end of his mysteries. It is to be regretted, therefore, that comparatively few authors practise this system of contrasting alternation, and that so many, yielding doubtless to the solicitations of publishers, create millionaires merely to massacre them, and follow up that process by providing their de-

tectives and policemen with strange implements described as 'toothcombs' with which to separate the unwanted just from the wanted unjust.

But just as not all writers are carnivorous, so are not all publishers reprobate ; and, indeed, it is to their enterprise and judgment that the present generation owes a debt of gratitude for reissuing in cheap editions\* the finer achievements of the Old Masters of this form of craft. In this way we can readily compare the technique of those who thrill us now with that of the men who kept our sires and grandsires awake till dawn with the prowess of heroes who landed each criminal fish in turn without the assistance of finger-prints or chemical reagents, telegraphic warnings over the official tape-machine to all police stations, wireless messages to shipmasters upon the high seas, photography, the telephone, or any means of locomotion more rapid than a hansom cab. It is, indeed, remarkable what those giants of old were able to accomplish with their almost unaided brains and eyes. The last of them was, perhaps, that charming Canadian creation, who as November Joe, the Detective of

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\* CRIME AND DETECTION. With an Introduction by E. M. WRIGHT. (The World's Classics. Milford. 2s. net.)

the Woods, brought an unrivalled mastery of venerie and woodcraft to the assistance of the police of North America in clearing up the mystery surrounding crimes committed in the open air. Doubtless he perished in the war, and few there are among modern detectives who are at their best under the sky. Probably this is inevitable. In this town-bred age the average reader is better able to appreciate urban tracking amid the countless bolt holes and the myriad unobservant eyes of a metropolis than to follow the finesse of a man able to read a cold trail through a wood or across a moor. There are so many books on town-work that with a little application and some personal practice and experience a writer can produce a reasonably convincing urban chase but it needs much longer preparation to produce an effective essay in cross-country work which will satisfy the experts. Mr Austin Freeman, a Carnivorous writer who occasionally enjoys pleasant excursions into the investigation of Vegetarian crime, has, in Dr Thorndyke, a detective who can track just as efficiently under the sky as under a ceiling. He is just as able as the most scientific American characters to make use of modern resources, but,

unlike so many of them, he is neither overburdened by his equipment nor helpless without it. Sherlock Holmes, now in a well-earned retirement, used almost to boast that he had no use for knowledge other than that which would assist him in his profession. Mr. H. C. Bailey's Mr. Fortune, on the other hand, shares with Dr. Thorndyke the conviction that a successful modern detective, while he knows he can never be omniscient, should be as omniscient as it is possible to be. That, in itself, is a proof of the progress made in the profession since Holmes first put up his plate in Baker-street—even if he only did so metaphorically—nearly forty years ago and admitted Dr. Watson to a certain, rather limited, degree of confidence.

Since then great men have helped to make the career of a detective what it is to-day. Like that of journalist, it has risen wonderfully in self-confidence, and in the eyes both of the public and of the police. Holmes and Arthur Morrison's Martin Hewitt were tolerated, but no more, by the uniformed professionals ; their successors have frequently been quite politely treated ; and now Dr. Thorndyke is frequently retained for the Crown—for he, unlike so many

of his predecessors, can appear in Court in wig and gown—and Mr Fortune is at least a semi-official and probably has a room, laboratory and secretary of his own at Scotland Yard. It is chiefly in America nowadays that we find in fiction that antagonism which it was once fashionable to assume in England between the private practitioner and the police. That probably arises from the fact that fiction almost always presents a policeman in the United States as overbearing, incompetent, needlessly suspicious, generally a torturer, and in most things quite careless of law, often dishonest and not seldom a criminal himself. Naturally the atmosphere of bellowing and bullying, of flagrant illegality and corruption, with which so many writers in the United States surround the police in their fiction, is unfavourable for the careful and conscientious detective work played according to our rules of cricket and hunting as adapted to crime. and a decent detective naturally keeps the police at arm's length just as the unhappy relatives of the American corpse, or witnesses in the case, wish that the murderer had chosen them for his victims instead of leaving them exposed to the tender mercies of the arm of the law. It is



probably largely due to her unwillingness to expose her creature as little as possible to so uncongenial an atmosphere that Carolyn Wells usually introduces Fleming Stone at such a late stage in her stories, and makes him in consequence work at such high pressure to rescue the innocent from the verbal and physical buffetings of the official detectives.

In this country, under more favourable conditions due to that co-operation with the authorities on the part of the public which is characteristic of our authors and of the public for whom they write, there are several rising private practitioners, and it is even possible plausibly to present a police hero in a detective story. The creator of Inspector French undoubtedly made a mistake in first introducing him in his 'greatest case' as any subsequent appearance can hardly fail to have a suggestion of anticlimax about it—a fate which the author of *Trent's Last Case*, has escaped by making of his man, as it were, a *hapax legomenon*. Mr. Wallace, on the other hand, repeatedly introduces a brilliant and attractive young detective who stands high in the confidence of his superiors at Scotland Yard, but it is always under a

different name. In this way the author is able to flavour his record of crime and detection with a love interest and to marry off his hero and heroine in nearly every volume. But it is rather like making an otherwise acceptable character commit bigamy, two or three times a year, under an alias—a proceeding reprehensible in the eyes of the public and possibly dangerous even for an important official. Mr Reeder, on the other hand, another of Mr Wallace's creations, about whose first appearance there is some uncertainty—owing to a careful confusion of names for the purpose of deceiving some rogues—is rather a misogynist who confines himself to his very efficient work and leaves philandering to the uniformed constabulary. Among the unofficial practitioners who are making names for themselves are Mr Lynn Brock's Colonel Gore, who has a pretty flair for out-door tracking, Mr Landon's 'Grey Phantom,' who, like Arsène Lupin years ago, turns against the world of rogues in which he used to have his lawless being and has to work hard to clear himself of a carefully concocted accusation of murder, a crime which he very properly abhors. Mr Strong, in recently presenting Professor Criddle to his readers, reverts

to the eccentric type which was popular some years ago, when an exaggeration of the well-known mannerisms of Holmes was considered appropriate to a private investigator of crime. Somewhat of the same type was Mr. Herbert Jenkins's Malcolm Sage, a man who found it impossible to work with incompetent superiors but figured very efficiently in a number of remarkable adventures. Dr. Hailey, fortunately, still has his feet on the ladder of fame up which Mr. Antony Wynne is conducting him, in spite of a well-concealed tendency to obesity, which in no way militates against the nimbleness of his wits or his activity in the prosecution of his cases. The fact that Dr. Hailey is a physician shows that Mr. Wynne shares the opinion, now increasingly prevalent, that the modern detective should be provided with a medical training ; for the murderers in stories of the Carnivorous School are usually exceedingly subtle in their methods and able to throw dust into the eyes of the layman, no matter how observant he may be in general. It is indeed largely due to this modern requirement that the two men who are at the head of the profession are both physicians—Mr. Fortune and Dr. Thorndyke.

Of these two Fortune is gifted with the ability to sense evil, and is frequently aided in his work by the intuition that such and such a state of affairs 'is all wrong' or that some character is 'not really a nice person', but for all that he is as careful over his evidence as anyone could wish, although he often comes to his conclusions a little ahead of it, so far as the reader is concerned, and produces it in a subsequent retrospect of the case. Thorndyke, on the other hand, is disinclined to rely on intuition and, although happy in the possession of a rich vein of dry humour, and in no way eccentric, cannot compete in charm of conversation with Fortune, who is the wittiest detective who has yet appeared in fiction. Thorndyke, a grave and sober medico legal practitioner and counsel, conforms with the early practice which demands that a detective, like a priest of old, be celibate, but Fortune gaily marries early in his career, and is nowise hampered by the possession of a wife, although it is possible that some enemy may in future strike at him through her. That other shining light of the Intuitionist school, Mr Chesterton's Father Brown, who is even more capable than Fortune of, as it were, 'smelling

out' sin, is, as a priest, naturally unmarried. Thorndyke, however, by no means steers his course through loveless pages, as Mr. Freeman has devised a most ingenious scheme of harnessing a love interest to his plot without affecting the equanimity of his hero. By the same device he also overcomes another difficulty. Sherlock Holmes as a type caught the fancy of the public to such an extent that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle set a fashion in the presentation of detective stories through the medium of a companion to the hero whose intelligence and powers of observation were so nicely calculated as to give the reader a pleasing sense of slightly contemptuous superiority. The Watson who was the *fidus sed hebes* Achates of Holmes was supported in his task of setting a precedent in this usage by the rather more intelligent Brett who chronicled the achievements of Martin Hewitt; and the fashion became prevalent. It has its advantages. By allowing his reader to follow the working of his hero through the senses of a third party an author is able to give him something for his mind to chew upon. He thus keeps the reader more interested in the mechanism of detection than if he were to tell the story direct and run the risk of

serving up a diet of predigested facts. Mr Bailey is able to chronicle the achievements of Fortune directly and is never insipid, but Fortune is not quite so interesting to follow while at work as Thorndyke. With the former the reader is like the man who waits outside the covert until the hounds come out in full cry. In the case of Thorndyke he is more in the position of the Master or hunt-servant who is able to watch and appreciate the nicety of their work through the covert as well. Mr Freeman, therefore, having decided to adopt the Watson system, improves upon it. The original Watson fell a prey to matrimony in *The Sign of Four*, and was ever after quite as useless as Holmes himself as a partner in a love interest. Mr Freeman realizing the limitations thus imposed upon a single Watson, escapes from them with a masterly simplicity by putting his Watson into commission. His commissioners, like their chief, are physicians, or barristers, or both, and with an almost unfailing regularity one or another of them is sacrificed to Cupid while Thorndyke moves through each successive book heart-whole and unharmed. In this way Mr Freeman cleverly enables Thorndyke to stand well both with those

who hold that a detective should be celibate and with those who enjoy an additional thrill in a detective story by finding an appeal to the heart interwoven with that to the head.

In this matter of matrimony for detectives there is a difference of opinion ; but, in deference to the older and, as many think, sounder tradition of celibacy, a detective Benedick, although he may use up a whole book in catching her, seldom obtrudes his wife in any following volume. Mr. Bailey, who makes precedents, portrays Mr. Fortune as quite a ladies' man as well as a husband ; and Mr. Bennet Copplestone provided his truculent, efficient, but hardly lovable Dawson with a wife who must have been sorely distressed by her lord's disguises and by some of the things which he considered it to be his duty to do while professionally engaged. Often, however, marriage is like retirement from business for a detective ; and an enterprising young New Yorker of the name of Jones, who plainly had a great future before him half a generation ago, has never been heard of again since his wedding day, a fate predicted for him at the time by an interested reviewer. If some authors clutter up their detectives with a love affair of their own

when they ought to be busy elsewhere, more spoil their man's chances by saddling him with an impossible weight of irritating or clumsy dialogue which makes the poor fellow appear to be a prig, a vulgarian, or a propagandist. Mr Chesterton at times provides the characters who associate with or impinge on Father Brown with such unusual opinions and philosophies that the reader is left with nothing but the certain faith that the little priest will make it all right in the end after behaving, *en route*, rather like those clever cartoonists who appear to draw a landscape or a face and then by turning it upside down or sideways show it to be a battleship or the representation of a Guildhall banquet. If some writers hamper their man by the ungainliness of their style, or by exciting his heart, others tend to cramp his style by serving up his adventures in so compressed a form as to give the reader but little opportunity to get the flavour of the case before he finds that it is finished. Mr Foster is rather like this in his treatment of Ravenhill, a reporter-detective, who at least deserves as much space from his creator as that which his editor can not fail to allow him. Given elbow room, Ravenhill may yet go far



The detective story is a thing of comparatively recent growth, possibly because it is a matter of only a few generations since readers could be persuaded to allow their sentiment to support law and order and those who laboured to uphold them, instead of as a matter of course taking the side of the picturesque and outlawed underdog fighting against odds. In old times a detector was on a par with a delator and shared the obloquy reserved by schoolboys for sneaks, by the lower classes for 'narks' and 'noses', and by others for spies, informers and blackmailers. Detective, as an adjective in the quasi-respectable society of the not yet popular New Police, dates back only four-score years and as a substantive has not yet reigned as long as Queen Victoria. The thief-taker of old, or his more efficient successor the Bow-street runner, is seldom the hero of a story; and the public, unless directly aggrieved, does not appear to have done much to help them against rogues. Consequently, the detective story as we know it is a modern development and its technique is still in the making. That is fortunate, as for best part of a generation there was a tendency to stereotype it on fixed and rather narrow lines. Of late,

however, there has been a move to introduce novel features, particularly in the direction of a break away from conventions which tended to hamper an author's freedom of action. Mr Freeman, for example, will often give his readers an exciting prologue, a full story in itself, of how and why the crime is committed before unleashing Thorndyke to build it up again from its remains, like an archæologist engaged in reconstructing a forgotten civilization from the contents of a tomb or the foundations of a ruin. Or he will allow Thorndyke to make play with things like finger prints, or bloodhounds, which long enjoyed an almost sacrosanct prestige in the eyes of the public since Mark Twain's Puddenhead Wilson rescued a man from a lifetime of slavery on the strength of his thumb marks recorded while in his cradle. Thorndyke shows how bloodhounds can be used to mislead the police, and how the ends of justice can be almost hopelessly defeated by the interested manipulation of finger-prints. Mr Freeman does not disdain to allow Thorndyke to busy himself in exposing the harmless machinations of a jester in the case of Angelina Frood, and makes a very good story of it, capped as it is with one of those dramatic instances

of an opponent's case being shattered in the moment of its triumph with a thunderbolt of evidence forged by Thorndyke with the assistance of the constant and invaluable Polton and the Watson-commissioner for the time being. Further, Mr. Freeman and Mr. Bailey alike find it unsporting to keep their man in safety while he is engaged in pitting his wits against a hunted and presumably harassed criminal. It is all very well for a commander-in-chief to conduct his campaign from the reasonable security of a sheltered General Headquarters; but a duellist should take equal risks with his opponent, and the wearing of secret armour is forbidden by the Code of Honour. A private detective is not exactly either the one or the other, but is more like a hunter of big game, who may be assisted by beaters or even ride upon an elephant in tolerable comfort, yet is likely at any moment to be called upon to provide for his own safety. Thus there is a pleasing sense of hazard attaching to the careers of both Thorndyke and Fortune, as determined and well-planned attempts are made upon their lives and reputations. In such hands as those of Mr. Freeman and Mr. Bailey, whose delicacy of touch is rivalled only by the prowess of Thorndyke and

Fortune, the English detective story has grown of late years into a very fine flower from the stock planted by Poe and grafted and watered so cunningly by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Mr Morrison

## JOHNSON IN HIS LETTERS

With possibly the sole exception of Socrates, no personality in the whole range of literature has remained so contemporary with posterity as Samuel Johnson, LL.D. Never was such an immortality as Johnson's, for never did Providence arrange that the perfect biographer and the perfect subject should collaborate in the circumstances in which those two complemented one another. Boswell was at the age of hero-worship when he first sought the acquaintance of the illustrious personage who was then in his middle fifties and at the height of his fame. But his youthful reverence did not blind him to his idol's imperfections; and his account of his first impressions of Johnson at his chambers in the Temple is ruthlessly frank:—

His brown suit of clothes looked very rusty . . .  
his shirt-neck and knees of his breeches were loose . . .  
and he had a pair of unbuckled shoes by way of slippers.  
But all these slovenly particularities were forgotten the moment that he began to talk.

It is the virtue of Boswell as a biographer

that, while setting down naught in malice, he resolutely extenuates nothing. The combination of Boszy's art with Johnson's nature has produced the almost mythical figure, whose external slovenly particularities contrast so piquantly with the orderly particularities of his intellect. Yet the very perfection of Boswell's achievement has tended to obscure or misrepresent both himself and his subject. Macaulay could not find words strong enough to splutter his contempt for poor Boszy. 'Many of the greatest men that ever lived,' he wrote, 'have written biography. Boswell was one of the smallest men that ever lived and beat them all.' Then Boswell is branded as a dunce, a parasite, a coxcomb, a slave, a Paul Pry, a common spy, a common tattler. Because of all these deficiencies, this 'inspired idiot', argues Macaulay, wrote one of the best books in the world. His argument carried its own refutation, has carried it indeed so far that we have to-day a school of critics who are prepared to argue that Johnson owes his fame entirely to Boswell.

If anything were needed to confound the hyperbolists on both sides, it would be furnished by even the most cursory reading of Johnson's

letters, isolated from their Boswell and from all explanatory or illustrative circumstance. In the little unannotated volume which has just come from the Oxford University Press, we have pure Johnson, unexplained, and divorced from any context, Johnson the man and friend as well as Johnson the Great Cham of Literature. His letters to Boswell alone disprove Macaulay's estimate. From the earliest days of their acquaintance up to the last years of his life, we find him writing in the most affectionate terms to the friend who was thirty years his junior. 'I long to see you and to hear you', he writes in reply to a letter from young Boswell in Corsica, 'and hope that we shall not be so long separated again'; and sixteen years later, at the age of 72, we find him still writing in the same strain:—

The pleasure which we used to receive from each other on Good Friday and Easter Day, we must be this year content to miss. Let us, however, pray for each other, and hope to see one another yet from time to time with mutual delight.

Are these the sentiments that a man of Johnson's stature would display towards a man of whose observations (according to Macaulay) 'not one is above the intellectual level of a boy

of fifteen,' and who, in his letters, 'is always ranting or twaddling'?

So much for the Boswell detractors. What of those who would have us regard Johnson as 'the great Sham'? It may be true that 'the judgments which Johnson passed on books were in his own time regarded with superstitious veneration, and in our own time are generally treated with indiscriminate contempt.' We are again quoting Macaulay, who perhaps lived in an age contemptuously disposed to the gods of its grandfathers. By a curious chance, we happened recently upon a judgment of Johnson's quoted appreciatively and unblushingly by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch—'as Johnson said of Gray's *Elegy* '—which is evidence that the pendulum has swung back again.

Whatever may be the ultimate fate of Johnson's literary judgments, he will long stand supreme in his own sphere as a master of architectural prose built up on Latin. It is a style which chills by its ordered formality, and it lends to his letters, when he employs it, a certain air of ceremoniousness and aloofness. But that the style was studiously cultivated to suit its purpose and was not the involuntary expression of



a pedantic mind is proved abundantly by the tender familiarity of his letters to Mrs. Thrale. The Johnsonian style as exemplified in the famous letter to Lord Chesterfield remains the classic model for epistolary prose. If its cold elegance at first repels you, accustom yourself to the deliberate artifice of an age in which, generally speaking, sense had not yet been softened by sensibility, and you will come under the spell of the majestic balance of Johnson's antitheses and the placid harmony of his thoughts.

But it is his wisdom, his more than common sense that are perhaps the most individual marks of Johnson's genius. Quotation is inadequate, for Johnson's wisdom is to be found everywhere. All manner of persons came to him for advice on all manner of subjects; and to many he proffered it unsolicited, for he could not refrain from giving his opinions upon any subject that cropped up in his letters as in his conversation. Perhaps the supreme test of his merit is that when one has surrendered oneself to his manner one can read on indefinitely with delight and edification. Even in this more demonstrative age there are those who can still find recreation in the eighteenth century garden of Johnsonian prose.

## LETTER WRITERS

The pleasure of making anthologies is not to be communicated. But there is a real excuse for anthologies, chiefly because, they are a convenience, but also because a good anthology is a criticism of the whole art from which the selection is made. The critical purpose of Mr. Brimley Johnson's anthology, which, as he says, is not so much an anthology of letters as of letter writers, seems to be to define this art. After having, in his preface, quoted several definitions, Mr. Brimley Johnson admits the impossibility of a direct definition. 'However variously expressed, all definitions attempt to convey the idea of something that is literary without being literature.' But Mr. Johnson's anthology is also meant to be convenient, and it, therefore, contains such letters as Lord Chesterfield's, and Dr. Johnson's letter to Lord Chesterfield, which must considerably extend the definition of letter writing as an art, and are scarcely literary without being literature.

It is certainly not of such letters as these

that we think when we try to bring to our minds the perfect letter, but rather of Cowper's or Lamb's letters, or of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's, or again of Pope's, of which there are rather unexpectedly no examples in this anthology. And indeed Pope's letters help one to distinguish the letter from any other kind of writing because they are so different from his poetry, because in them he allows a delicate and personal sensibility to count more than anything else, and above all more than correctness. For while we must allow letters, like any other art, to be artificial, it is convention of good letters that they should appear to be guided by no rules, built on no structure, and assisted by no plan. Rules, structure, and plan are all there but, as in a modern novel, they are the image of experience of life, and the thought seems to move as it moves in real life, not according to the laws of logic or according to some rule like those which Aristotle found in tragedy, but rather by free association; so that not only what is described but the method of description appears to be realistic and natural. The letter should touch life at every point, and the reader should feel that in spite of all this there is art, rather than,

### LETTER WRITERS

as in a tragedy of Racine, in spite of all this there is life, or psychology, or realism. Of literary geniuses Lady Mary Wortley Montagu said 'They tell me nothing, nothing of what I want to know. They are choked with intellectual frivolities. They cannot say 'whence I came, and whither I go' What do they know of themselves?' This is typical of a good letter writer, who will have nothing to do with intellectual frivolities like the unities, or a beginning, a middle and an end.

It is this characteristic of letter writing as an art which allows the letter to be of such supreme importance to the historically minded, an importance which Mr Johnson has emphasized by arranging the letters in his anthology in different classes, to which he gives such names as 'sense and sensibility', or 'manners and morals', so that the reader may in each section taste the flavour of an age unmingled with alien elements. But is this tasting of history after all the supreme gift of letters? After travelling about the world Lady Mary Wortley Montagu returned with the opinion that there were but two kinds of human beings, men and women, and that they were very like each other. The

reader of letters may equally well travel about in history and return with the same opinion : an opinion which does not imply a monotonous similarity in the people whom he inspects, but only that their conditions and the time in which they lived did not prevent them from having the same capacity for variation at any time. Life being always the material of which the letter writer makes an image, there will be a certain consistency in these images, and the trivial changes of history will not obliterate this consistency. But if letters are so photographic it may be asked wherein they are an art. One quality of literature they have in that they express something clearly, for they express and make an image of the writer and of his sensations. But there must also be arrangement of what is expressed and selection, and the convention of letter writing is that the principle of arrangement should be concealed. But the arrangement is there, there is after all a beginning, a middle and an end, although the principle by which things are arranged in a letter is much more like the principle on which things of immediate importance to ourselves, and only to ourselves, are arranged in our

## LETTER WRITERS

minds in everyday life, than it is to the principle on which events are arranged in a tragedy, with reference to their universal significance or importance. The values which determine the structure of the letter are arranged in the scale according to their immediate and personal importance to the writer, and not according to their universal importance to everybody.

## READERS AND BOOKS

It is now possible for anyone who is prepared to spend a small proportion of a small income to acquire a library which, if it is not a Gentleman's Library, and fortunately such a thing scarcely exists nowadays, at least contains most of the books which one would wish to read and own, not in expensive but in pleasing bindings and print. So great has of late years been the improvement in the production of fairly cheap books. It seems that there is no reason why anyone should endure, except in a few instances, the possession of an ugly book, and that anyone may, if he is careful, enjoy the possession of a great many delightful books, even if he decides as a rule to spend no more than ten or fifteen shillings on each book. And of course, in most cases it is not necessary to spend anything like as much as this.

This improvement is most opportune, for it comes at a time when it is no longer possible for most people to solace themselves with the possession of old books. Twenty years ago it

## READERS AND BOOKS

was possible, for anyone who wished to get some pleasure from a book other than the pleasure of reading it, to acquire a good library of old books without ruining himself. But old books have now risen in price till many of them are hopelessly out of reach, and nearly all of those which are not are just out of reach. It has now become pretty well a necessity to buy new books if we are not to be ruined, and if we wish for a library which besides looking well will contain most of the books which we wish to own and to read.

To help us to make such a library there is the National Book Council, which exists to 'promote the habit of reading and the wider distribution of books'. This society issues from time to time lists of books on different subjects, and in general it laudably exerts itself to make people read and own books. Since of all pleasures and habits that of reading is the most unselfish, even those who positively wish that they did not find so much to read might well belong to this society, which will persuade others to share their pleasure. And since of all pleasures that of owning books is one of the most selfish, the most selfish cannot but be



gratified if others should also own books and not seek to borrow. But most of us are not so full of information or possessed of so many books that we have only to turn our attention to the needs of others, but rather we are grateful for attention to our own needs. As to the beauty or fitness of the books which we buy, since it is possible to buy pleasant editions of a great many past writers of merit, it would be as well if those who wish for an edition of some writer would, when there is an alternative of a pleasant edition, refuse an ugly one. We cannot do this with books by modern writers, but here the publishers often do their best for us; and it is possible that free and general expression of opinion about a book, whether it is beautiful or ugly, may in the long run have the same effect as the more direct action of a consistent choice of pleasant editions. But these are practical matters, and our practical action is justified by the pleasure which may be got from looking at books as well as the pleasure of reading. So that it may be relevant to consider the nature of this pleasure.

For the reading of books is a pleasure and an activity of a different kind from the posses-

mon of books. In the scholar, and in the reader who is perhaps most apt to command our respect, these pleasures and activities coincide. But a great number of people prefer to buy some books and only to read others, and this is not always because they buy only the books which they wish to read more than once. The most strict reader, who wishes only to read a book and to get no other pleasure from it, may be guided by this principle, but others are persuaded to buy or not to buy by less tangible and intelligible reasons. There always comes a point in the life of a boy who has hitherto read a great many books which belong to his parents or have been lent to him, when he decides to buy some few books of his own. And it is a curious fact that these books which he buys are not likely to be those which previously he most delighted to read. It is possible that he will do little more with them than look with pride at their new clean backs as they stand in a small hanging bookshelf. If then the pleasure which he gains from looking at them is not in proportion to the pleasure which he gains from reading them, of what nature is this pleasure and why does he buy them? Perhaps if we try to answer

this question we may learn of what nature is the pleasure which most people get from books other than the pleasure of reading them.

Let us at first set aside the collecting instinct and the need to be in the fashion ; for, while these causes may and often do cause people older than schoolboys to buy books, it would be rather cynical to suppose that very many people buy books solely for these rather sordid motives. It is more reasonable to suppose that the boy has discovered the purely æsthetic pleasure which he can get from looking at books. This may be so ; but then he would surely buy handsome editions of those books which he most likes to read, and so minister to two pleasures at once. We may rather suppose that certain books have associations which particularly appeal to him at this time, and that these associations are roused in his mind as much by the appearance of the book as by its contents. His pleasure then is of the same nature as the pleasure which Lamb got from an old lending-library copy of the 'Vicar of Wakefield', giving as his reason that he liked to imagine what comfort this identical copy had given to some overworked sempstress. Perhaps

few of us would go so far as this, since we have not all so omnivorous a sensibility as Lamb had. But if Lamb liked certain books to be in shabby bindings, this liking is not so absurd as if he had wished a certain kind of picture to be covered with thick varnish or a certain kind of statue to lack an arm. Such things have been wished for, but the wish meets with none of the indulgence which we give to Lamb's eccentricity. It is reasonable that we should like our old, shabby, and even ugly copies of certain favourite books better than any new copies, however neat and fine. And the pleasure which we get from new books is often of the same nature as the pleasure which Lamb got from his old lending-library copy, though here it may be duly mixed with some more purely æsthetic pleasure. The æsthetic pleasure is indeed what the producer of the book should primarily seek to give, since the other pleasure is more uncertain and depends partly on ourselves.

This pleasure of association is easy to understand when the associations can be so easily traced, as in the instance of an old lending-library copy. Also it is fairly easy to trace the associations of an old book, for they are apt to be

definite and the same to all. They are poured into a mould by history and antiquity, and there they must stay. One man can scarcely get one sort of pleasure from the quarto edition of Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall' and another another sort of pleasure; for if we know the past we all know the same past, though allowances may be made for different kinds of historical imagination. And even with old books the more superficial qualities of their appearance may in different people arouse *different* associations. If someone has set himself to buy Pickering's editions of poets, starting with the reasonable idea that they are very sensible and often beautiful books, as he looks at an old bookshop he will find that he notices with more pleasure a book which resembles a Pickering edition, even though this may not in fact be at all a pleasant book, and certainly one which he would never have noticed at all before he began to think of Pickering's. Still more variable then will be the associations of modern books, since they have not been fixed, as are the associations of the past. And a greater degree of sensibility is needed to appreciate the flavour of modern books. An old book is often in the same

position as David Garrick's copy of a Folio Shakespeare. This may be a pleasant thing to possess, but about it there can be no individual flavour such as we ourselves give to our own new books in our own minds.

To be more particular, the schoolboy generally buys books of a certain kind, and as a rule absolutely opposed to the kind of book which he most likes to read. For boys generally like to read books which force their way into the hierarchy of literature, if they do so at all, because they are abundantly full of life. Such are accounts of remarkable adventures, travels, and marvels —

Aethereal journeys, submarine exploits,  
And Katerfelto with his hair on end  
At his own wonders, wond'ring for his bread.

But when the boy first thinks of literature as a thing separate from mere reading matter, where the most marvellous is the most entertaining, then he chooses as examples of literature books which are definitely and distinctly literary, literature which can be cut with a knife, rather than books which are vigorous and full of life and consequently admitted solely by virtue of these qualities to be classical or good books. Such

books which the schoolboy buys are the essays of Mr. Beerbohm, not because Mr. Beerbohm is the most delightful of essayists, but because his are essentially the essays of a literary man. And also he will buy the Georgian books of poetry, because such poetry is as far as possible from the saga or the adventurous epic or ballad, and is rather the graceful product of a lettered age. And, as it happens, these books are bound and printed in a way which transparently shows that they are literary books. No book of adventure is commonly bound in yellow cloth with a neat white label on the back, and with another neat white label surprisingly inserted at the end of the book in case the first should soil or wear out. It can scarcely be explained why such a way of producing books should seem to be literary, but it is so ; and any little discovery of this sort soon becomes appropriated to its own kind of book, so that we should be startled and even annoyed if the ' Arabian Nights ' should come out in this way.

And so the contemplation of these books which look literary leads the schoolboy into a new and wonderful territory, not the territory of the marvellous, but one more august in

which, as he knows, his elders mostly dwell. And since these literary books are produced in an elegant and graceful way, the approach to this territory does not appear hard, even the possession and contemplation of such books is enough, for thereby he seems to himself to be looking over this literary territory as from a distance. If literary books are dealt out to him, as unfortunately they sometimes are, which remind him of school books, then he will only enjoy looking at these books and reminding himself of their presence after he has read them and enjoyed them and not before, and thus the pleasure of looking at books will not minister to and encourage the pleasure of reading them. How many classical writers have been rescued from the oblivion of all but scholars by the habit which has grown of late of bringing them out as if they were not trivially elegant, but approachable and pleasant, though dignified authors.

It should be the care of those who produce books to see that their outward appearance bears some relation to their contents. For if a book is suitably and elegantly produced this is a kind of advertisement of its matter, and we do not wish



to be deceived by an advertisement. But the associations roused in the mind by the appearance of a book have also an individual quality which, though it is not of a contrary nature to the contents of the book, nevertheless exists apart from them and gives pleasure by itself. In the eighteenth century—and at all times before the present variety in the methods of producing books—there were, to all intents and purposes, but two kinds of pleasure, other than the strictly æsthetic pleasure, to be got from the appearance of books. One kind of pleasure only came after the book was read and familiar, and such was the pleasure which came to Lamb from the appearance of his books. Thus we may be unwilling to exchange our ugly copy of some favourite poet for a new and prettier copy because the appearance of the old copy, the very placing of the poems on the page, immediately stirs our past pleasure in reading that poet. This pleasure must at any period have been procurable from books, for it depends entirely upon ourselves and has no reference to the way in which books are produced. But as to the pleasure which may be got from books before even they are read, when books were uniformly

bound in leather, the ideal of the book owner was to form a Gentleman's Library. Thus there was little variety, and where there was any it had little relation to the variety of the contents of the books, for uniformity is the essence of the Gentleman's Library. One of the largest of all eighteenth-century books is Prior's poems, which were produced in a size which, we believe, is called 'elephant folio,' and in various other sizes, all more or less 'large paper' editions. It is an enormous and ridiculous book, but it was calculated to look dignified and perhaps to stand on the shelf besides Rowe's 'Lucan's Pharsalia' and a large book of engravings of Græco-Roman sculpture. It is preposterous that Prior should have stood in such company and in such a disguise, so that a first sight of the book we might well say —

No idle wit, no trifling verse can lurk  
In the deep bosom of that weighty work,  
No playful thoughts degrade the solemn style,  
Nor one light sentence claims a transient smile

But it is not preposterous in a Gentleman's Library, where it is the dignity of the gentleman and not the precise proportion of pomp or elegance suitable to the book which has to

be considered.

But when bound books ceased to be things of common use, with the waning of the Gentleman's Library, books came to be printed and bound in so many different ways that, whereas formerly books could raise up only a limited number and kind of associations as if by one or two solitary instruments, now it is possible for books to play upon us as if by a whole orchestra. Those books in yellow cloth with white labels call up to our minds, before even we read them, a lettered delicacy and elegance. Those handsome editions of poets published by the Oxford University Press, in which there are facsimiles of title-pages and ornaments from original editions, and which are bound soberly but pleasantly in a reddish brown cloth with large white labels, call up to our minds a more scholarly but still attractive literary territory in which we may wander attentive to the knowledge of the past, but still pretty well at our ease. Rough brown cloth and grey michelet paper bindings, and within a slightly precious medieval type instructs us that we must look for a classic, but that we may treat the classic not like schoolboys who only have textbooks, but with the appreciation of ripe experi-

ence And for lighter books of the eighteenth-century there is particular style. Printers' ornaments and sometimes engravings of the period are used, a delicate type is elegantly spaced, and the book is bound in very light colours, grey or white and sometimes a lightly patterned paper. And thus the eighteenth century which never existed except in the minds of twentieth-century people is conjured up, a delicious and frivolous age in which life went on its course as if it were a ballet. When Mr George Moore's books are produced in this way the conjunction of two so dissimilar worlds is surprising, but also surprisingly felicitous.

In this way the appearance of a book conceals its contents when they are dull and reveals them when they are not. And it is as well that we should see the best side of literature. For the muses are said to be melancholy, and Burton says that he believes that the reason why they alone of Zeus' daughters remained unmarried was because they had no portion. If we are to believe many literary men, there is nothing to be said for reading as a pleasure, and many of those who said nothing against reading have inveighed against the possession of books. There

is no more melancholy chapter in the 'Anatomy of Melancholy' than that which deals with study as a cause of melancholy, and enumerates all the disastrous results of reading :—

How many poor scholars have lost their wits, or become dizzards, neglecting all worldly affairs and their own health, wealth, *esse et bene esse*, to gain knowledge. . . . Your greatest students are commonly no better; silly, soft, fellows in their outward behaviour, absurd, ridiculous to others, and no whit experienced in worldly business.

Samuel Butler would have nothing to do with the possession of books. He said that the only books which were necessary were Bradshaw and the Post Office Directory, and that only when one had thoroughly mastered the contents of these volumes was it time to think of procuring other books. And no one was more delighted than Butler to find that a famous book was not worth reading and to say so. Dr. Johnson thought so little of handsome books that he used to maltreat his friends' books in direct proportion to their value and beauty. But this sort of thing is so like the great. They behave in this way in order to shock those who are not great, and they throw away all the superficial ornaments and pleasures which surround their profession in

order that it may seem the more austere and disinterested. They tell us that the muses are melancholy, that we should master the contents of Bradshaw before we turn to other books, and that beautiful books are unworthy of respectful treatment, for they know that we shall never summon up the courage to act upon their advice and the example which they try to set before us. They know that we shall remain convinced that they only abuse literature because they are so free of it, in the same way as a very pious man allows himself a little mild blasphemy because he has been presented with the freedom of Heaven.

The great can do without the graces of literature, to them a book is the same whether it is ugly or beautiful, and they do not mind if they have to go to the British Museum, since they need no inducements to read. But, to those who are not great, reading is often a trouble. We know, of course, that the greatest pleasures will come to us if we persevere, but we are mostly in the position of the schoolboy who must have the literary territory of his elders made attractive to him—we must be able first to view it from a distance and see how

attractive it is. Macaulay may assure us that

Cervantes is never petulant. Demosthenes never comes unseasonably. Dante never stays too long. No difference of political opinion can alienate Cicero. No heresy can excite the horror of Bossuet.

But till we are as adult as Macaulay we must agree with Bagehot:—

But Bossuet is dead; and Cicero was a Roman; and Plato wrote in Greek. . . . After dinner Demosthenes *may* come unseasonably; Dante *might* stay too long. . . . Dreadful idea, having Demosthenes for an intimate friend! He had pebbles in his mouth; he was always urging action; he spoke such good Greek; we cannot dwell on it—it is too much.

We cannot accuse Bagehot of that vanity which Samuel Butler displayed. His words are sincere and must have the approbation and the sympathy of all but the great. But there is one place where Dante cannot stay too long, and that is upon our bookshelves. There Dante, if he is bound, we may suggest, in white vellum, printed with irreproachable dignity and illustrated by Botticelli, may stay for ever and never be removed, except, of course, in order that we may read him.

But, since reading is primarily a pleasure

we should not come to it as if to a study, and we need only a very gentle persuasion to overcome that reluctant and sluggish mood when we say to ourselves that we would read if there were something new to read. In such a mood as this, those winter evenings by the fire which poets and essayists repeatedly describe, the fire inevitably crackling, have no art to persuade us. Nor will all the prestige of literature and the solemnity of book learning do anything but frighten us away. For these persuasions are too earnest, and it is hard to believe that anyone would use this battery of rhetoric to make us enjoy a simple pleasure. We may like to be reminded of long winter evenings and those crackling fires, storms outside and cups of tea, but since these pleasures are so solicitously set before us we are apt to suspect that it is because the pleasure of reading needs to be very much augmented by these attendant circumstances. But the aspect of beautiful books which are admirably calculated to set out their contents in the best light is a more gentle persuasion, and seems perfectly guileless.

Moreover, the beauty of books is not like an advertisement, which when it has done its



work is no longer a matter of importance. It is seldom that we can so constantly and for so long a time enjoy a beautiful thing as when we are reading a beautiful book. For since a beautiful print must also be one which it is easy to read, in our reading we are constantly attended by a beauty which is almost unconsciously appreciated, since it comes humbly in the disguise of utility. And since the contents of a book may make us even like an ugly and shabby book, it may also happen that, just as the illustrations to his works often make what is gloomy in Dickens appear to our recollection as sordid, an author whom we have read with the ease given by a beautiful print and the comfort of a pleasant binding may gain in our memory an increased virtue. This virtue, which exists in the memory, is not irrelevant and unimportant; for nearly all pleasures, except the æsthetic pleasure, come from the memory and are not immediately aroused but are felt a long time after they are first stimulated. If a novelist were to describe his past reading in the same way as Proust described his past life, it is likely that he would say almost as much about the appearance of books as about their contents.

## A THRILL WITH A PENALTY

All men have desired to pull the communication cord, and only too many close their lives with deep shame that they never achieved the courage or the means to do so. The railways in their fierce competition with road traffic have no greater asset than that emergency apparatus, with its grave warning and heavy penalty. With it they strike the imagination of the young, making those first railway journeys which are adventure enough anyhow into a real contact with the grimmer side of things. 'To stop the train, pull down the chain,' has a note of reality about it that drives all other nursery rhymes from the youthful head. As the years pass and the value of £5 is increasingly appreciated it is recognized that pulling these cords is essentially a rich man's thrill. The resolve to pull them one day is an incentive to industry and the hidden dream of many an industrious apprentice, for those philosophers who preach the importance of experiencing fully and deeply and of regarding the experience as an end in itself

join with those who point out that life is valuable for its high, rare, intense moments in keeping alive the normal human desire to pull the chain. The railway companies are indeed fortunate in having these moments to sell, and, though theirs is in a sense a luxury trade and a tax on the £5 may well seem reasonable to the Inland Revenue, more might be made of it in the general scheme of railway publicity.

What is chiefly feared by the general public is a lack of imaginative understanding on the part of the guard and, in short, an insufficiently sporting chance of saving the £5. It is no doubt largely fear that makes railway companies so stern. Like the railway company in Mr. Kipling's story in 'The Day's Work,' they fear that private people who are not severely dealt with may develop a delusion and think themselves 'divinely commissioned to stop all trains.' It is true that the experience might prove too much for weak heads, but railway companies ought not to expect to go through life without running risks. Emergency should be widely interpreted. The railways have recently done many things to encourage travel. They have urged extra politeness upon

## A TIPILL WITH A PENALTY

staffs already polite, tempting all of us who cannot find politeness at home to take journeys to special and remote stations because we know our tickets will be collected there with so much suave charm and so intimate an understanding. They have granted half fares in the restaurant cars to the young without any prying inquiry as to when they last saw a meal in their parents' home. But what they have not done is to provide an outlet for the over-repressed. A railway company in its size and power and regulations is akin to a Government, and men feel a particular joy when they get the better of it. The lack of humour and the severity which mark Government action should be the railway company's chance. If there were lucky railway tickets whose chance buyers had the right to stop a long, fast, and important train without penalty, many a jaded taxpayer would find a new zest in travel which gave him a chance of one brief but glorious moment of irresponsible power.

## RIGHT-HO !

Old-fashioned, well-brought-up people may now and then be heard complaining—very gently, because they are too frightened to speak harshly—that young people nowadays do not say ‘please’ and ‘thank you.’ The cause does not seem to be want of gratitude. A small boy who is tipped will grin with pleasure, as small boys ever have; and when a kind uncle presents a grown-up niece with a cigarette-holder or a vanity case, she will very probably reward him with: ‘O Nunc, how posh!’ or some such monosyllabic formula. But neither of them will say thank you. Sometimes the omission is caused by shyness, especially on public occasions such as prize-givings, when the winners are tongue-tied by exposure to the general eye. The main reason is probably change of fashion. ‘Please’ and ‘thank you’ are going out. A year or two ago freakish fashion ordained that we should all say, ‘Thank you so much.’ In mid-Victorian days Edward FitzGerald grumbled at the use of ‘thanks’ for ‘thank you,’ unaware apparently

that it is frequent in Shakespeare. And now it looks as if 'thanks' and 'thank you', and 'please' as well, were to drop out of use altogether, and no little girl who says 'Pass the jam' ! will be caught up with 'Pass the jam what?' Thus will naughty little girlhood lose the opportunity of making the perfect rejoinder 'The jam-pot !'

These polite uses of 'please' and 'thanks' are not very old, and no doubt we can get on without them. But, if go they must, their mere disappearance would be the less of two possible evils. The greater is the substitution for them of some other phrase. Time was, and within living memory, when those who received instructions or agreed upon a course of action would say 'Yes, Sir,' or 'Very well' They say now 'Right-ho' ! It makes some old fashioned people shudder, especially as in certain dialects the sound of the last syllable can be a very ugly sound. No familiarity is intended it is the new way of speaking. But, on the whole, if the substitutes for 'please' and 'thank you' are to be anything like 'right-ho,' silence were better. And silence is by no means outside probability. Watching the change in speech that is going on

all about, old-fashioned people may wonder whether words are going to be so clipped that there will be nothing left. The hurry against which Sir Hugh Allen has nobly railed is cutting up words as fast as the craze for bungalows is cutting down trees. 'As soon as poss.'—young folk, of not ungentle nurture, will say that, nor know that they have offended. The motor-car, of course, is largely responsible for this. Measured by engine-revs. it takes a very long time to say the extra syllables of mag. or decarb. Why should we waste breath at lawn tennis on saying the whole of fifteen when half will do? And then to hand is the small ad., ever instructing its readers in the art of abbreviation. 'Exc. cookg. bkft. opt. lib. (or sep.) tab. perl. sup. best pos. fac. sea. e.l. b. h. and c.'—if you are sharp enough to know what that means, you are not likely to linger out the conversation over the lib. tab. by pronouncing more than the first syllable of any word. And when, having passed the pep. to some elderly lady, you hear the obsolete sound of 'Thank you,' how good to be ready with the gallant reply: 'Don't mensh; you're welc.'

## SOME THOUGHTS ON HOWLERS

The year 1900 saw the publication of a book with the forbidding title 'The Herbartian Psychology Applied to Education' But the book itself was a delight. I for one immediately succumbed to its charms. Here was no dull application of a dreary science (if it was a science) to a drearier art (if it was an art), but a fresh and cheery outlook upon the world in general and the school world in particular. A new and distinctive voice had made itself heard, and a new name was added to the roll of great teachers. We have been indebted to John Adams for many good things since that day, and the last is a book\* in which he has reverted to his first love. Using Bacon's terminology for fallacies he called the first chapter in his first book *Idola Scholarum*—errors peculiar to the school and the schoolmaster. And the book he

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\* ERRORS IN SCHOOL THEIR CAUSES AND TREATMENT By Sir John Adams University of London Press 6s. net.



has just published may fairly be regarded as an expansion of that brief and extraordinarily witty chapter.

Sir John begins one of his present chapters thus:—

Among the mercifully short sentences that on the humble pages of our first Latin *delectus* pave the way for the ghastly complications that follow, we find *humanum est errare*. Few pupils need to take the trouble to look up the Latin dictionary in dealing with this easy sentence; they know that it means what it says, and they are content to leave it at that. But if a troublesome schoolmaster comes along, and, not content with a literal translation, demands a fuller explanation, the bored youngster plunges into the dictionary for further ammunition, and then declares that *errare* means to wander.

This is in the true Adams vein. It affords a hint of the delectable way in which we are enticed to examine in detail the weltering mass of error of which the mind of man, and particularly the mind of youth, is capable.

Nobody is more fully alive than the author to the dangers of error-hunting and to the opprobrium to which the schoolmaster is exposed by his censorious attitude of mind. While admitting the unfortunate tendency of the schoolmaster to carry his fault-finding habits from the

school to the world, he defends him against the insinuations of the psycho-analysts. The tendency is as a general rule neither due to a desire to inflict pain on others nor to a superiority complex, but rather to mere mental inertia, to the difficulty of changing a dominant habit. The schoolmaster is a far more modest person than he seems. The dangers of error-hunting are not all extramural: they exist in the school-room as well. In the directions issued by Gentile to the Italian elementary teachers in 1924, directions which Sir John describes as 'probably the most human set of instructions ever officially issued to the professional teachers of a nation,' it is pointed out that constant correction on the part of the teacher cannot fail to produce a strained relation between teachers and taught, that the ideal to be aimed at is happiness in the school, and that fault-finding works effectively against that ideal. Sir John's comment is: 'Persistent fault-finding cannot but irritate the pupils, but what is the teacher to do? He cannot allow the errors to go unchecked, unless he can share the optimism of Gentile and his colleagues, who assure the teachers that accuracy will come in due course,

and almost of its own accord. . . . The truth is that there is much more in this matter than has entered into the philosophy of the kindly optimists of educational headquarters at Rome'. He goes on to contend that although the fault-finding attitude has to be given up, correction is a regular part of the teacher's business, and indeed one of his main functions.

Sir John Adams's attitude to the whole question is that of the wise and kindly physician. Just as the body can go wrong in a variety of ways, so can the mind ; and just as the doctor has his prognosis and diagnosis, his preventive measures and his curative treatment, so should the educator have his special devices for detecting errors, for discovering their causes, for curing them, and, above all, for preventing them from occurring at all. The analogy must not be forced too far. Error and disease are not comparable all along the line. There are psychologists who regard the method of trial and error as the natural and normal means of learning. We progress by making mistakes and rectifying them. Still the analogy is helpful so far as it goes. It at least points to the necessity of understanding the machinery of mind that makes

## SOME THOUGHTS ON HOWLERS

errors possible. It shows that to be surprised at their occurrence is in the teacher a sign of weakness. 'How does he deal with unexpected difficulties?' was a question which a school-master had to answer respecting a teacher on probation. The reply was 'All his difficulties are unexpected'. The teacher who reproachfully asks, 'How on earth did you come to make such a silly mistake?' has sent forth a boomerang which hits him harder than it hits his pupil.

Sir John begins with the picturesque error—the howler. The howl (of laughter, not of pain) must come from the teacher, not the pupil. 'In the American magazine *Life* there was once a picture of a schoolboy who, in answer to the teacher's demand for an example of a collective noun, answered "a vacuum cleaner"'. The smile on his lips and the quizzical expression on his face as he turns to his class-mates for applause clearly marks off this sally as belonging to a region outside the howler range. It is the boy's joke. He appreciates it as much as the teacher, in all probability more'. As examples of the genuine howler the author cites a boy's attempt to explain the term 'grass widow' as 'the wife of a dead vegetarian,' and gives the instance

of a boy who maintained that Margaret of Anjou was 'very fat' because the history book said that she was one of 'Henry's stoutest supporters'. He also tells us about the boy who when pressed with questions confessed that he was a noun, and was further made to assert that the other boys running about in the yard were verbs. Grammar is indeed a fruitful field for howlers. 'We are doing grammar at school', said a little girl to me recently, 'and I don't like it. I don't mind nouns and verbs, but when it comes to injections and injunctions it's a bit thick'.

Words are constant sources of confusion to the growing mind. Nor does the dictionary always mend matters. The boy who translated *de mortuis nil nisi bonum* as 'of the dead nothing but bones' trusted to his common sense rather than the lexicon. Not so the boy at St. Paul's who, according to Paul Blouet, had to translate from a French play, 'Diable! comme le vieux est capricieux'! He looked at his dictionary, an etymological one, and rendered the passage thus: 'The old man is devilishly like a goat'.

The root from which those errors sprang

is simple and easy to detect. It is not always so. I rarely pass the statue of Boadicea on the Embankment without calling to mind a school-girl's written account of an educational visit to Westminster Abbey. She said, 'Near Westminster Bridge we saw a statue of Judas in his cariot.' It seems clear that her knowledge of Judas Iscariot was gained not from the Book but from the oral Scripture lesson. A spoken language is more fruitful of misconceptions than the written language. A Frenchman who had been in England for some time confessed that there was one English word which entirely baffled him. It was on everybody's tongue, and yet he could never find it in any dictionary. The word was 'thaddledoo'.

Sir John has much to say about mistake-traps, their use and abuse. Years ago I made the acquaintance of an old country schoolmaster who had a choice store of traps for the catching of unwary pupils. He regarded them as fine teaching devices. 'How many legs has a sheep?' he would suddenly ask a class of boys. 'Four Sir!' 'And how many legs of mutton can the butcher get from one sheep?' 'Four Sir!' 'Then where does the shoulder of mutton

come from'? There is some sense in this. Its method is Socratic. It uncovers a latent contradiction, and then resolves it. But some of the old fellow's 'catches' seemed to have no purpose beyond venting his own freakish humour and giving him an opportunity of calling his boys a pack of fools. This, for instance: 'In coming to school this morning I saw a girl in a white dress milking a white cow. What colour was the milk, boys'? 'White, Sir'! 'That's right. And further on I saw a girl in a black dress milking a black cow. What colour was *that* milk'? He seldom failed to get somebody to fall into the trap. The superfluous insistence on colour reminds one of the candidate who at an examination in physics was asked to say how he would construct a prism so that light would not pass through it. It was a question of the critical angle of refraction. The candidate however wrote: 'Make it of wood, and paint it black'. To return to the black milk, it is incredible that the boys really believed that any cow delivered such a fluid. They simply yielded to the suggestion of the moment and gave their master the answer they thought he was fishing for. It is quite easy by a few leading questions to get

young children to admit that there are *no* women in the Isle of Man—and still easier to get them to withdraw the admission

There are, in fact, points of contact between the teacher and the conjurer. The conjurer relies for his effects partly on suggestion and partly, or indeed mainly, on the fact that the field of attention is limited. If his audience is looking and thinking in one direction he knows very well that it is blind to what is going on in other directions. His eyes are fastened on the spot where there is nothing taking place. His patter invites the onlookers to watch the wrong process. So the teacher bent on leading his class into a pitfall can dispense with a positive *suggestio falsi*: he need only drain their attention into one channel. The classical example is 'Which is correct, five and seven is eleven, or five and seven are eleven'? In thinking of the grammar the victim will ignore the arithmetic. When in past years I occasionally marked the 'method' papers of young teachers I observed that when they were asked to work a simple subtraction sum and explain the *rationale*, they reasoned well but reckoned badly. The logic was right, but the sum was wrong—not, of



course, invariably wrong, but in a surprisingly large number of cases.

The teacher's mistake-traps are sometimes useful and always pardonable, but the inspector's or the examiner's may at times become mischievous. No inspector well skilled in his craft can fail to make any class in any subject commit the most flagrant blunders. It does not argue profound knowledge on his part; it merely means that a wide experience has shown him where the pitfalls are. Nor does it argue incompetence on the part of the teacher; it only means that he has not approached the subject from every possible angle. I once taught chemistry to a class which was receiving grant from South Kensington and was subject to both inspection and examination. One day an inspector came down and asked the simple question: 'What substances do you need to make hydrogen?' The answer came promptly, 'zinc and sulphuric acid'. 'Yes, and what else'? A dead silence. Nobody was able to tell him that water also was necessary—that if you poured concentrated sulphuric acid on zinc clippings no hydrogen would come off. And yet all the students in the class knew it practi-

cally They could all prepare hydrogen in the laboratory, nobody ever failed to add the water. But since the water did not enter into the chemical equation they were unaware of its function, and the question, 'What else?' proved an admirable eye-opener. When the same inspector came again next year to see another class he asked the same question, but it called forth a very different response. It stimulated the work, but it did not evaluate it. Some inspectors are equipped with an armoury of such questions, and I think it will be admitted that the questions are as a rule used for a beneficent purpose. The modern inspector is well aware that his main task is to find out what the children know, not what they do not know.

## TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE

According to the Postmaster-General there is a steady annual decrease in the number of telegrams. This decrease can hardly be due to a growing preference for the more leisurely habit of letter-writing. It may be presumed that we telegraph less because we telephone more, and to a number of people this choice of undeniable conveniences appears only a choice of evils, but the two are evil in different ways. From the recipient's point of view the telegram is a terror and the telephone only a bore. There are many who can never get over a certain shudder of apprehension at the unexpected sight of an orange envelope; in the moment of tearing it open the mind has time to conjure up visions of every possible domestic catastrophe. The ring of a bell, on the other hand, portends only some tiresome person wanting to ask a tiresome question, or it may be only a wrong number. As we drag ourselves to our feet we feel 'sorry we have been troubled,' but we do not feel frightened. In the case of sending a message the posi-

tion is reversed. We are frightened of dropping our two pennies in at the wrong time. We are frightened of the unknown and irascible person for whom we did not ask, or of being snubbed if we protest mildly after nothing particular has occurred for five minutes. There is nothing positively alarming about sending a telegram, but it is a bore to find one string with no pencil attached to it and the next with a pencil that jibs unless it be licked into obedience. It is also a bore to try to get fourteen essential into twelve incomprehensible words.

There are presumably some purposes for which the telegram will always be the more popular vehicle. There is, for instance, the happy occasion of an engagement or a wedding. It is a simple matter to dash off heartiest congratulations and be done with it, but to have to say the dreadful words would be insupportable. The Swiss postal authorities are so sensible of the advantage of telegrams for this purpose that they have prepared a number of forms suitable to joyful occasions. Perhaps the recipient may be a little depressed as he opens telegram after telegram couched in precisely the same felicitous terms, but he will no doubt learn to take the

will for the deed. And for purposes of necessary untruthfulness the telegram is surely supreme. Many a man can be a splendid liar by telegram who could not for a moment withstand cross-examination on the telephone. In such cases the need for brevity is an immense safeguard. Nobody with any regard for economy would put into a telegram more than one reason for not going out to dinner, whereas there is a fatal fluency about the telephone. It encourages the adding of one artistic stroke to another till the great edifice of excuses suddenly becomes top-heavy and collapses. There was once, if memory serves, a certain farce of Maddison Morton's in which the chief point, the joke round which the whole play revolved, was the sending of a telegram. To-day all plays have the telephone, and there is one in which the wireless plays an important part. The telegram is for the moment at a discount, but perhaps some day there may be a play in which it comes into its own again as an interesting relic of a bygone age.

## REMEMBRANCE DAY

'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend' In the simplicity of these words lies one of the most profoundly moving thoughts in the world, in them is expressed an ideal than which there can be no grander. We cannot at any time repeat them without feeling that we are upon the border line of human possibility, that we are passing into the presence of God. The love that will make the ultimate sacrifice is an immortal love, transcending the bounds of the finite. On Armistice Day, especially, the words hold for us a meaning that is beyond expression. For we have dedicated that day to the memory of that mighty host of men and women who, in the Great War, offered up themselves for us, their friends. We have made of it Remembrance Day. They died for us, in face of so stupendous an offering we are dumb. We remember, and year by year we humbly acknowledge the debt in that exquisitely fitting gesture, the two minutes' Silence.

They died for us, and the least we can do in

return is in those two sacred minutes every year to die with them. That is the meaning of the Silence; for that brief instant of time the nation ceases from its life and becomes one with its dead. We meet then in Eternity with those who on earth were our friends, who fought and died for us.

In that Great Silence we who knew the war pass through an emotion that is hardly to be endured. Our memories are too vivid, our thoughts too personal; Time, which mercifully blurs all other grievous memories, seems but to sharpen the edge of these, and the keener pangs of individual loss outweigh profounder feelings. Yet the true spirit of Remembrance Day is not altogether reached until we sink our personal bereavement in thankful contemplation of the love which impelled those hosts to spend themselves so freely for us, until we can meditate with holy sorrow on the wonder of a nation's manhood gladly suffering and dying that others might be saved. Not that we can ever understand; there is in vicarious suffering a sublimity which passes comprehension, which is beyond reason. But though we cannot understand, our imagination can conceive; therefore on Re-

## REMEMBRANCE DAY

membrance Day let us give ourselves wholly to the effort to reach out to a conception of that sublimity. On all other days we can live our busy little lives, hurry to and fro, work and play, be glad and sorry, dispute about rights and wrongs, for this one day let us turn from all that is of this world and for a short space let us think on and be one with those who 'martyrs not less than soldiers unconquerable, except by Death, which they had conquered have set up a monument of native virtue which will command the wonder, the reverence, and the gratitude of our island people as long as we endure a nation among men'

It is by sharing with the young the sense of triumphant joy in the goodness and strength of human nature, which the thought of the great sacrifice gives us, that we shall best hand on the tradition of this day, the tradition of remembrance. We knew the war, we shared—some more, some less—in the suffering of those whom we honour, we drank with them some draughts of the cup of their misery. But the generation which is growing up in our midst, the children in our homes, the children who in their happy multitudes throng our schools, do not know the



war, cannot realize as we do the heroism it inspired. Yet Remembrance Day is theirs as it is ours. The hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of men and women who gave their lives in the war gave them, not for us alone, but for our children and our children's children. Can that miracle of vicarious suffering be sufficiently celebrated by those whom the accident of time compelled to be witnesses of it? Can one generation mourn the loss of these who died not for one generation? Rather is the keeping of their memory sacred a perpetual obligation, an obligation to be handed on piously from one generation to another, for ever. The good name of our fatherland, its honour and integrity, are in the keeping of no one generation; nor is the memory of those gallant hosts who in the day of England's need offered and gave their all for England's sake.

We must hand on the tradition of remembrance. The memory of those who died must live for ever; theirs was a sacrifice the thought of which will sweeten all the ages to come. And in the simple memorial services, beautiful and dignified and restrained, which are held on Armistice Day in schools throughout the land,

there can be no finer way of handing on the tradition. The youngest child, standing for the first time with his fellows to honour the glorious dead, cannot but be impressed when he hears read the names of those who from that school went out to war and who to the glory of God and in defence of their land and their loved ones gave their lives in blessed sacrifice. As he bends his head through the Great Silence he must dimly feel something of the wonder of it all. With the sadly exultant notes of the 'Last Post' there must sink into the inmost depths of his being some realization of the solemnity of that hour, there must be planted some idea of the magnitude of the debt he owes to those unknown friends.

From the school service, more than from anything else, will our children gain their early impressions of the meaning of this day set apart. So let there be in it no hint of the tawdry or the meretricious, nothing of vainglory or of boasting, nothing to mar the perfection of its requiescal spirit. Yet whatsoever can be done to add to it a rich and stately fullness, austere and refined, let that be done. The choicest words in prayer, words reverently spoken, words which will breathe full-hearted thankfulness to

God for these his noble children; readings from the Scriptures, exquisitely read; grand and solemn music played by the hand of a loving master; lines of immortal verse fittingly declaimed. A service full of beauty, full of truth; naught else will serve.

And if, as teachers or as parents, we talk with our children on Remembrance Day, as it is right we should, of the meaning of this holy anniversary, of what shall we speak? Not of war and of its horrors, not of its iniquity and its loathsomeness, not of the envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness which provoke and compel it. Spare them that for this one day. Not even of the nobility of the attempts to prevent war; this is not a day for propaganda, though that propaganda be the highest and holiest. This is Remembrance Day, a day of mourning and of pride. Let us speak only of that greater love, of that ineffable grandness of soul that is in man and that drives him to throw away, as if it were a thing of little price, all that life means to him, so that it may mean more for others. Let us strive to show to our children that it is because of the mystery of that greater love that this day is a holy anniversary,

## REMEMBRANCE DAY

an anniversary sadly and yet joyfully to be observed. Let us lead them gently, reverently, into the presence of those who, dead to the flesh, are yet for ever England. Nothing is here for wailing or despair, nobly these quit themselves and well, and left the world the cleaner and the grander for their death. Their memory gives us strength, and in the strength of their strength we too can be strong, and go on inspired and unafraid.

## THE LEGEND OF THE WAR

One of the most remarkable stories of the nineteenth century is that of the growth of the Napoleonic legend. It may be that the twentieth century will have a yet more remarkable story to present, that of the growth of the legend of the Great War of 1914-1918. The War is by now remote enough for the dash of fiction, which, colouring history, produces a legend, to pass in many quarters unchallenged, even unnoticed. There is hardly a man or woman under thirty in this country who took an active part in the War; there is not a child in our junior schools who can remember it.

What is the character of the legend? It is as yet impossible to say; the forces at work creating it are so diverse in their aims and their methods are in many cases unconscious either of aims or of methods. But one can distinguish in it a growing sense of the horror and waste of war, of the tragic futility of the whole business. There is not a trace of any effort to glorify war, but rather to expose its depths of

suffering and degradation

Who are the creators of the legend? There are some obvious creators, and behind them many others whose work is not so obvious to the general eye. The novelists, the essayists, the dramatists, the painters, and the sculptors whose creations have been so prominently before the eyes of all during the past few years, cannot escape their responsibility. Some of them are much nearer to history than to fiction, but the form in which they present their history compels them to employ just the methods of distortion, of disproportion, which distinguish legend from history. The late C. E. Montague, when he wrote 'Disenchantment,' wrote of his experiences—physical, intellectual and spiritual—in the ranks of a battalion not unknown to history, every word of what he said was true, in the sense that the incidents of which he spoke all actually happened, but he was concerned, not with what happened, but with the effect of a succession of events and experiences upon his own delicate and sensitive mind. In the same way, *Journey's End* is contributing to the legend. The success of this play is due to the fact that every one who witnesses it recognizes at once the truth to life of every

incident, every remark. It is history, in that it represents exactly what did happen in the dug-outs in front of Cambrai or any other sector of the front. But it is legend in that every incident, every remark, simply because it is selected and presented, is thereby given a disproportionate value, and is therefore to some extent fictitious.

Among the creators of the legend whose work, and the results of whose work, are not so obvious, must be reckoned the teachers. It may be that they have but one single opportunity during each year of fixing and perpetuating it ; but even if that be the case their influence must be colossal. The thought of 200,000 men and women bringing their united influence to bear, if only for a few moments each year, upon millions of the most receptive minds in the country, is a staggering one. Upon the force and nature of that influence must depend in very large measure the character of the legend of the War that will hold the minds of the people in years to come.

It is a responsibility which cannot be evaded, for the War cannot be forgotten. It behoves us then that the legend shall be worthy of the cause, and of the reason for its continuance. War must not be again, for war under modern conditions

## THE LEGEND OF THE WAR

is too colossal and too wasteful a tragedy to enact, it has become a retrograde step on the march of humanity to better things. Therefore it is right that our legend shall imply the stupidity, the futility, the horror of war. But we must not forget that war, though in itself debasing and disgraceful, calls forth—and did call forth in abundant measure between 1914 and 1918—the highest and most beautiful qualities in the human race, and calls them forth more urgently than do most of the demands of peace. We cannot forget, nor should our children ever fail to realize, what it means that an almost innumerable host of men and women made the supreme sacrifice by giving their lives for their country. On that we can pause year by year, for therein lies the heart and meaning of our legend. War calls forth the highest and most beautiful qualities in man, but only to destroy and waste them, for war can be satisfied only by death, and wholesale death. When mankind can learn that it is better to live worthily than to die worthily, that the demands of peace, though less strident than those of war, can be satisfied by no lesser qualities, the object of our legend will be achieved.